

2012 to 2015 Eckhart Tolle TV Part 1

[Speaker 1] (0:07 - 1:32:51)

I was putting away some clothes this morning, hanging up some clothes and folding something. And we talked yesterday about somebody asking a question about repetitive things. You get up in the morning, you do your repetitive tasks every day.

And most of one's life consists of little tasks, there's rarely anything big. And if there is, it doesn't last long. What would be big?

A wedding, a funeral or in North America, Thanksgiving, Turkey dinner, Christmas, a promotion, or suddenly they write about you in people magazine. Hopefully something good. Or some big thing, you're going to talk or give a talk to a few hundred people.

But even a seemingly big thing consists of just one little thing at a time. Now, if you had the idea, this is just a little example, I'm coming back to the clothes in a little while. One could say that folding up clothes and hanging up shirts is an insignificant thing that one would only do in order to get somewhere else.

And in this case, if I thought, okay, I have to get this done because that's really big thing is waiting for me there. All these people are waiting for me to talk, give a big talk. Then in the meantime, all the little things leading up to it would be regarded as something that you have to get out of the way or pay little attention to because I have this big thing coming up.

And then this big thing coming up is a mind form, would become a mind form, big thing called big people wanting me to say something significant, but who knows if I can say something significant. That would have led to not only not paying much attention to the little things, but also most probably to a sense of anxiety because the mind has created a big thing. Now, if I had that, then it would not be enjoyable to do what I do because if every time I got anxious before a talk, that would be dreadful.

I'd rather not do it. So why is there no anxiety? Because I realized that even a so-called big talk consists of little things.

You approach it, you take, they pick me up in a buggy and then drive. Then I step out and then it's just one step at a time. And then I sit in a little room for a few minutes and look around and breathe.

And then I come here, it's still one little step at a time. And then I sit here and then one word comes out and then another word comes out. It's just, that too is just small.

It's only the mind that creates differences and says, I'm waiting for the next big thing. And for other people, a big thing could be the next vacation they look forward to. In the

meantime, they're just trying to get to that future moment or the next, or getting married, looking for someone to get married, finding the right relationship.

That would be the big thing, wouldn't it? If I could find that, the partner, the ideal partner for me. And then you're looking towards that.

And in the meantime, little attention is paid to the intervening periods. But the strange thing is, most of your life is the intervening periods. 95%, no, 99% is something that happens while you wait for something else to happen.

And it's an unconscious way to live. So as I was folding up my clothes and I realized how extremely pleasurable the activity is. And not because of the simple movements of putting it away, but there's an underlying stillness with it that goes with that.

And so as you notice that, as you do little things, in other words, 90 something percent of your life, if you're aware not only of what you are doing, of course, yes, that's part of present moment awareness is to give attention to what you're doing so that the doing is not just a means to an end. The greatest fallacy and big dysfunction in people's lives is that almost all they're doing is a means to an end. That implies future, of course, is a means to an end.

And unconsciously, the end is regarded as more important than the means. But of course, the end, which is in the future, is always in the future. The moment it comes, it's the present moment.

But the mind pattern that has lodged itself firmly in people's minds is always that the next thing, and it's the thing that I really need to get to. So the moment the so-called future comes, it appears as the present moment. Something else, almost simultaneously or very quickly afterwards, something else appears looming up in the so-called future.

Oh, I need to get there. Of course, there are things that you need to achieve and go towards, and that involves time and so on. But if that absorbs almost 100% of your attention, or even if it absorbs 80% of your attention, that's you're out of balance.

Because if future absorbs 80% of your attention, you only have 20% of your attention left for the one thing that is ever real in your life, which is the present moment. So the present moment is just, okay. That's why many, many people don't actually, very rarely feel really comfortable with the present moment.

It's rare for people to regard the present moment even in a friendly way. Many people live continuously in some kind of almost confrontational or denying relationship with the present moment. And then their entire life is then not aligned with the present moment, which is life itself.

Because the only place where life can appear to you is in the present moment. There is

nothing else ever. And so your life is not aligned.

Your life with a small L is not aligned with life, with a capital L. And that out of alignment creates an unhappy existence. And millions of people leading such an unhappy existence create an entire culture or civilization, every aspect of which reflects back to you that unhappy, basically unhappy state that all those millions are in.

So all the things that the culture produces, the civilization produces, the structures, the economic structures, political structures, educational, and so on, they will contain these elements of that state of consciousness that created them. So that's the dysfunctional element in politics, in economics, in educational system, and so on. Which all that, all those things that you can see are not working very well because they are products of a certain collective state of consciousness.

And the collective state of consciousness is made up of millions of individuals that produces the collective state of consciousness. So if you try to tackle exclusively the products of that collective consciousness in the form of the economic structures, the political educational system, and so on, then you're working only on one end of the spectrum and it's not the causal. You're working on effect.

And what you can do is limited. There are, yes, you can initiate changes, but what is the state of consciousness in the individuals and in you as you try to initiate changes? So the causal is the individual so that the individual no longer lives in a way that produces unhappiness and is dysfunctional.

So that the present moment is no longer reduced to a means to an end, but is given its fullest attention. And then I think you could, if you want to express it in quantitative terms, to say, reverse it, rather than 80% of your attention is where you need to get to and just 20% is here, reverse that. Have 20% of your attention on your goal and 80% of your attention on the doing now, whatever it is.

That means the quality of what you do becomes greatly enhanced, but without attention, quality diminishes. Now, quality, usually quality, people think in terms of something that you make and that can reflect quality, but quality really is a state of consciousness. And you can, there can be quality in a short interaction between two human beings that can be a high quality interaction and it can be a low quality interaction.

A high quality interaction is a true relationship at that moment with a flow of goodwill between two human beings, where the being of every person is fully acknowledged. And there is that field of attention and some stillness with it as the humans interact. That's a high quality interaction.

And then you have a low quality interaction, which is totally mind dominated. So you're basically just using, as you're using the present moment as a means to an end, whatever

comes into the present moment will largely become a means to an end including human beings, so that you no longer recognize that the being of the human being, all you're aware of is the human. The human part is whatever function or role they have at this moment.

So it could be your, but selling, buying something from somebody or selling something to somebody or asking for information, or you're, there's a form element to every human. I call that the human. Human is who you are in form and being is the formless.

Now that, I'd love to come back to that because that is vitally important that there are those dimensions to you. There's the human dimension. This is the person with a name and a history and successes and failures, et cetera.

And then there is the unknown dimension to who you are, the being that far transcends the person, but is relative to which the person is less than the tip of an iceberg. Now, you know, an iceberg is usually what you see when it floats in the sea is 10% of the size because most of it is underwater. So the human part of you, the person with an history and so on is less, much less than the tip of the iceberg.

There's a vastness beyond, which is the being. So this is, I like it that the English language uses the word human being. And the reason why we use human being is the English language doesn't have a word that includes men and women.

So traditionally they used the word man and then they said, well, it includes women. Well, now they say it, but in the past they didn't even say it includes women. They just said, all men are, what about the women?

So English language doesn't have a word. The German language has, of course, the word Mensch, which means man or woman, which is a different meaning from the Yiddish Mensch, which is a man of, which is a human being who has a heartfelt, true presence, something that he's a real Mensch. But the German word for Mensch just means human being, but it's one word.

But luckily in this case, the English language doesn't have that. For our purposes right here, we are lucky that the English language doesn't force us to say human being, because there's something here that reflects the dual nature, one could almost say, of every human being. Ultimately it's not dual, but let's call it dual, form and formless.

So the present moment gives you access to the deeper dimension within yourself. And that starts with a little thing like, let's come back to folding the clothes. Why does that feel so wonderful and peaceful?

Because the task itself doesn't really require that much attention. You can do it. You don't have to work out mentally, how am I going to fold these pants or trousers?

Or how exactly am I going to hang this shirt up? No, you just do it. It's simple and it's easy.

So a lot of your attention is left to spare. Now, most people with all that attention to spare, they go into all kinds of mind stuff. So they're not fully conscious of what they're doing.

They're just elsewhere. So I could have been here already giving a talk in my head. What am I going to say?

Well, I fold. And I wonder what's going to happen tonight with that. And then, when is our flight back home?

Or did I let go of the menu? What's for lunch today? What did he say to me yesterday that wasn't very kind?

What was it? And I really should have replied. What should I have?

I should have said this and this and this. And so it's a kind of sleepwalking existence. So you're folding.

Okay. You're not here. So all that attention that was to spare is absorbed by unconscious thinking.

And that's normal, very normal. But it's a pity, because all that attention that is spare attention, you could have used to become aware of the fact that you are conscious. In fact, so you become very still and you realize that stillness is your consciousness.

And then as you fold, whatever it is you're doing, your clothes, you feel this undercurrent of still alert attention. And that is the meaning of what in Zen, we mentioned yesterday. Okay.

In Zen, the phrase is chopping wood, carrying water. If you don't understand that, you say, okay, what's such a big thing about chopping wood and carrying water? Why are they saying that?

Of course you have to chop wood and carry water. Everybody has to, well, at that time, when it arose, everybody had to chop wood and carry water. Why even talk about it?

Well, because it points to something deeper. Chopping wood and carrying water is the same as folding your clothes or whatever it is that you do. The possibility of doing those seemingly repetitive things, not seemingly repetitive things, but at the same time, be there fully with your attention.

Not all your attention is actually on the doing because you don't need all that just to do these simple things. You don't need to chop wood and say, or carry water and have all

that. I must have all my attention on this bucket of water.

And this is why people spend years in Zen monasteries trying to get it, but don't quite get it. There was a, there's a story of a nun in a Zen monastery who was actually carrying a bucket of water and she was practicing chopping wood and carrying water. And at that moment she was carrying water and she was trying to really focus on the water.

So she didn't quite get it yet. And the story goes that the bucket was very old and suddenly the bottom fell out of the bucket and all the water fell out. And suddenly, as the story goes, she became enlightened.

After years of practice, this had to happen. And there was a deep, of course, symbolic meaning behind that. So the attention then is, some of your attention is on what you do.

Yes, you need some for that, but what do you do with your spare attention? You don't want to go where habitually everybody goes, which is drift off into completely unnecessary, very often unpleasant, very often negative emotion-producing thinking. Completely pointless.

You don't want that anymore. What you want is to be present, but that does not mean that all your attention is on the, yes, you give it your fullest attention, but whatever is needed, whatever attention is needed for it, the rest is available to you. And this is very hard to put into words.

And the only way you can understand what I'm saying now is by, at this very moment, experiencing it. As you're aware, for example, of this room, me sitting here, my voice, all those things, whatever surrounds us here, you don't need that much attention really to listen to me. You don't need to work out mentally what I'm actually talking about, because it's too simple.

You can't work it out in your mind. What's it? So there's just a lot of attention left as you sit here.

Oh, by the way, before I carry on, could we have the temperature a little lower? Because I see several people trying to keep cool and fanning themselves. Thanks.

Now, as you sit here, can you be aware of that field of attention in you, the consciousness in you that is perceiving this room and that is hearing the voice as visual perception, auditory perception? Can you sense that underlying all those perceptions, which don't require that much attention, there is something else. There is a depth in you, an alert stillness.

If you can become aware of that directly, and if I say become aware, it's not even like quite like that, because language causes, when you formulate a sentence, you have a

subject and an object. So when you say, I become aware of that underlying consciousness that creates a separation and a duality that isn't really there, it's not that you become aware because you are the consciousness. So the consciousness becomes aware of itself.

It's the awakening of consciousness to itself, an amazing event of cosmic significance, which will not be reported on CNN or Australian television today, but it is very important. The most important things are not reported, by the way, on television. So you become aware of the fact that there is this depth in you that you are essentially that depth behind things, so to speak, and you can sense there's also a power there, not egoic power, but there is an aliveness and a presence there that is enormously powerful.

It's the only power there is really. And when you connect with that power, which is not egoic power, egoic power says I'm more powerful than that person. So it's not comparative at all.

Then you feel you are just an expression of that power, which is universal consciousness power. And the wonderful effect that has on your life is fear goes away, because if you are that power that you can sense, what is there to fear? Fear, which includes anxiety and all other manifestations of fear, arises only when you are not aware of who you truly are, when you're not aware of that power of which you are only an expression.

That is your essential you, the person, is only an expression of that. If you're not aware of it, if you cannot sense it in yourself, of course you're going to have fear in one form or another, because you're cut off. Well, you're not really cut off, but if you don't know that it's there, it's as if you were cut off.

If you don't know the analogy, I sometimes use, if you don't know you have \$10 million in a Swiss bank account, then you don't, you only have the \$2 in your pocket, because you don't know there's a numbered account in a Swiss bank with \$100 million that's mine. You didn't know that. This is a poor analogy, because that power is \$100 billion is totally insignificant.

So I'm just using just an analogy. If you're not aware of it, it's as if you didn't have it, you're cut off. This is probably what Jesus referred to when he said, you are like a vine that is cut off from the main branch.

So that's probably what he was pointing to. So all the little things, so that means most of your life, you can actually use them in this way so that they become a help. All those things that don't require that much of your attention, they become, use that spare attention to go within, and another way of putting it, become aware of that field of attention itself as the consciousness.

And this is why it was so pleasant when I put away the clothes this morning, just, ah, it

wasn't the putting away, it was something deeper. And that's, you can practice that, practice it here and in the rest of your life with all the little things that make up most of your life. Whether you are a so-called VIP in the eyes of the world, a totally meaningless concept or not, it's still little things that makes even, and you become most effective when you give your attention to little things.

If there's something that absorbs more of your attention, then some attention will move more into mind and thinking, and you will have less than the being awareness, so to speak, goes a little bit into the background if you have to work something out or write something, but it's vital that it's still there. So there's, or you're engaged in a discussion that can very quickly pull you completely out of the being awareness. When you're getting your viewpoint, you need to defend your viewpoint now.

Now, there are two ways of defending your viewpoint. One is losing yourself in your viewpoint, and one is remaining in connection with the being awareness and then just put forward your viewpoint and why you have it, and then allow the other person to put forward their viewpoint and don't make them into an enemy, which is much easier now when you have not, you're no longer seeking your identity to derive your identity from your opinions and viewpoints. That's a dreadful state to be in because then you're surrounded by enemies or those who don't share your viewpoints or have opposite ones. They are awful.

These people are evil. The same thing happens with collective viewpoints. You have a collective belief system.

It's the same mechanism. Our belief is the only one. Obviously that's true.

All other beliefs are fallacy. They are lies spread by the devil. They're not our beliefs.

So these people are less than human who don't share our beliefs. It's insane, but normal. And what kind of a world does that mean?

What does that produce if millions of people are trapped in that dysfunctional belief system, egoic belief structures? And so when I talk about the little things, another Zen, I love these Zen people. There was a Zen master who was asked, what's the essence of Zen?

And now there are many different kinds of answers the masters give. None of them are answers that you would expect. And he said, Zen, or the disciple, of course, came, please explain to me again.

I've only been here for 10 years and I don't get it yet. What is it? I need a fuller explanation.

You haven't said enough. And what is Zen? And the master said, Zen is doing one thing

at a time.

Is that it? Yeah. Okay, thank you.

I'm going to look for another master who gives me a better explanation. But if he had really listened, that's all you need to know, doing one thing at a time. Attention.

So attention on what you're doing and attention on attention. Then you're no longer an egoic doer. If you don't have attention on attention, the doing becomes egoic seeking.

And it's not empowered. It comes out of the conditioning of your mind. So attention on what you're doing and attention on attention.

Then you are in touch. Again, that's another aspect of what we called yesterday one foot in one dimension, the other foot in that dimension. And then you are both a human and a being, a full human being.

And until you are able to live like that, you're not a full human being yet, as Confucius already said. Over 2,000 years ago, and many humans are still not, evolution has not come to an end of humanity or anything. We are still evolving, obviously, which this is not the end product.

Where we are at, I don't know, not that advanced. So the most important thing to get here, get, get it, get. The most important thing to get here is to be able to be aware of yourself as consciousness, or attention on attention.

This means, oh, this is another Zen story that just came to me. The disciple said, I'm going to take my leave now because I'm going to look for another monastery and another master, because you actually haven't given me the full answer. Can you just write something down so that it's just something for me to remember that is important, so some explanation.

And the Zen master, he always give me paper, pen, he wrote. There, and he said, attention. Okay, is that all?

Yes, please add a little bit more, just another few more words. Okay, give to me. And then the disciple reads it, attention, attention.

What does that mean, he said, attention, attention. What does it mean? The master said, attention means attention.

So the disciple was seeking to pursue Zen through mental concepts. And the master was attempting to help him break through mental concepts, because the answer to all, to who you are, the answer to the secrets of the universe, which are all in you, of course, you are a microcosm of the macrocosm, as above, so below, as the ancient philosophers already said. The answer, all the secrets of the universe are not to be found through

conceptual thinking.

What conceptual thinking can do is relatively little. And the human evolution, which has now reached a critical stage, does not mean that we are going to improve conceptual thinking. It's been helpful, it's done interesting things, it's created, of course, it has a downside, lots of huge problems, especially if it's not connected with wisdom, which comes from the being.

But you cannot further develop more refined conceptual thinking. We've come to the kind of end of the road of conceptual thinking, because what else is just putting words together in a different way. So we've tried so many ways of putting words together.

How many words, there are a limited number of letters in the alphabet, not to mention sounds, I talked about that already. There are a limited number of letters in the alphabet and a limited number of words that you can put together. Every book in the library, or nowadays on the computer, anything you read, any text you read, is words put together in a certain order.

And then you jumbled and you put, and then you have another text and you put a different one. But the number of words is limited. And they're just words.

So the answer is not in further development of conceptual thinking or other way of putting it. More information is more information because we live in the so-called information age. And you can get all the information on the computer that you, it is quite amazing.

Of course it is on that level that before you had to buy the Encyclopedia Britannica and it was quickly out of date. And now you can Google and Wikipedia and all those things. And it's all, whatever, all the human knowledge is there.

But human evolution does not consist in finding, getting more and more info. You don't evolve by getting more and more information. In fact, the more you stuff, get information, the more confused you get if you're not connected with being.

So much stuff, then the stuff accumulates in the head and all the devices, the more stuff comes into your mind. You absorb more and more stuff and you get completely scattered human. And attention deficit disorder, all these things, can't focus on anything for longer than 20 seconds.

Dreadful state to be in. Of course, yes, you know more than Jesus did 2,000 years ago. And of course you do on the level of information.

You know a hundred, 1,000 times more than the Buddha did, but that's not vital. So it's knowledge, but it's not knowing. So human evolution is not to completely abandon conceptual thinking.

No, to be able to use conceptual thinking without being trapped in conceptual thinking. So it's to transcend conceptual thinking. Transcend mean it doesn't, you don't remove it.

You go beyond it, but it's still there for you to use, but not for you to be used by. Because for many humans on the planet now, they are used by their mind. Their thinking is wild, just continuous input happening and going wild.

And one thought comes into their head, another thought comes, and then they link, the thinking's linked into the devices, internet and so on. Those, then they absorb the collective thoughts. They no longer know the difference between their personal and collective thoughts.

So our evolutionary challenge now is not to be drawn to go with the current of, which has enormous momentum, the current of conceptual thinking. And it's amplified by the devices that we have, computers for smartphones, pads, iPods, U-pads, and so on. And so this, it amplifies that, and it has an enormous momentum.

You can, you might have noticed the addictive nature of these devices because they are linked into that stream of thinking. So our challenge is not to be dragged along with this enormous current of thinking, conceptual thinking, which is egoic thinking, because the identity is lodged in the thinking. Because if we are dragged along, this, the development, the evolutionary development of thinking, which was a great thing, will turn out to be very destructive, and it would lead to our destruction if we were not able to step beyond conceptual thinking within, I cannot give you a timeframe, but it wouldn't take that long before things would collapse.

And first, people collapse internally, psychologically, and then the external structures collapse, and they will happen simultaneously. In other words, we would go mad. We're already mad in many ways.

But we would go even madder, more mad. And then things would collapse, and that would be, and then, of course, there's always, the universe is abundant and patient. Then, of course, there would be a new beginning.

Let's go back a few thousand years and start again. Why not? But it's a pity because it doesn't have to be like that.

There is a possibility that we can now step beyond to the next level of human evolution. And this is why we're here. And there is a lot of people, there is a longing in many, many humans, even those who have not yet come into contact with direct spiritual teaching, so-called spiritual teaching, there is a longing for something beyond.

And there's a dissatisfaction, of course, with the way people are now. So millions are very dissatisfied with life. They are missing out on life and the possibilities of life.

So we are stepping beyond. This is why I so often emphasize, learn to step out of thought. And it's not that hard because that is already in you.

It's covered the field of presence, aware presence is already there. Just notice that it's there. So now coming back to practicalities.

There's a phone call for you. That's okay. It's fine.

It's not a concert. So it doesn't matter that much. It happened at a concert I read the other day.

A violinist, I think, was playing. And of course they had asked people to switch off their phones. And just as he was playing, the telephone rang and then he stopped playing, got very angry.

And he looked at the person and asked her to leave. And she had to leave. That's not going to happen here.

So back to practicalities. It's the little things, walking, eating. Oh, eating is interesting.

Eating is also, there could be a lot of attention left over for being present as you eat. Now, most people eat unconsciously and they think about other things while they eat. And some people are actually pulled into more than their usual level of unconsciousness when they eat.

And occasionally I've observed people who the moment they put things into their mouth, they go completely unconscious. They might've been discussing philosophy before, great concepts. And then suddenly a food, a plate of food is there.

Okay, what was, okay, let's go back to Aristotle's concept of. So be conscious as you eat and feel, conscious means now as the two aspects, be conscious of what you're doing and be conscious of yourself doing it. Now yourself means not the historical self, not the person, but the underlying presence.

Sense, I call it your presence, although it's not yours, there's nothing is yours, but let's call it your presence, not the presence. Sense the fact that you are present and then do things. And when there's nothing to do, because you don't always, you don't have to do all the time, sometimes there's nothing to do and that's beautiful.

I love doing nothing, it's one of my favorite occupations. And when you do nothing, you'd simply, you're there, you contemplate. Now, if you're surrounded by nature, it's beautiful, you contemplate nature and as you contemplate nature, you also feel this underlying alert stillness.

And nature loves to be, as I said before, nature loves to be recognized in that way. It loves you for it. The birds love you, the trees love you.

That's my intuitive insight. I cannot prove it scientifically that the birds and trees love me. And how do you measure the love?

And, or if you are just even just being in a room to be with yourself quietly, just, there's a Chinese concept, wu wei, I'm not sure if I pronounced it correctly. It's translated as, it goes back to ancient Taoist spirituality. It means, this is considered one of the highest virtues and it's translated as sitting quietly, doing nothing.

Sitting quietly, doing nothing. It does not, there's more to it than meets the eye. It does not mean being semi-asleep.

What are you doing? I'm practicing sitting quietly, doing nothing. Let's have another beer.

No, it's a, it implies consciousness. So you're aware of being, so you could be in your room and be completely at ease with being there. And there's nothing that needs to be added to this moment.

There was a French philosopher, I don't remember the name though. I cannot, at this moment, access that file in my mind. And he said, all the problems of humanity can be reduced to a person's inability to sit quietly in a room.

All the problems of humanity can be reduced to this one thing. This is a human being's inability to sit quietly in a room. And again, there's a deeper implication than just sit quietly in the room, of being conscious of being.

I also mentioned on, when we started that evening, whenever it was, to be aware of, we talked today about doing small things, to be aware of the little things, particularly that surround you, not necessarily look for the kangaroos all the time, or the big lizards. I haven't seen any this time, but when we were here a few years ago, six years ago, I had an encounter with a, it was about this size, and it came very close to me. That was a very memorable encounter.

But I don't go around looking, where is he? I want to see him again. If he comes, he'll come.

But all the beauty that is in every little, even in a blade of grass, the beauty that's there. Sometimes you may want to focus on one little thing, one flower, one leaf, one tree, one bird. And then at other times, you can take in the totality of a particular view.

So you have a totality here of trees and plants and one or two houses, sky. So you can take in, but every, whether you focus on one thing or you focus on a larger landscape, larger section, visual section, sense yourself as the presence while you look. And that is how you become aware of the sacredness of nature.

And nobody could explain to you what sacredness means, but you will know when you sense it, you'll know it. It's all an expression of the one place. It's all an expression of the one, the underlying one life, one consciousness.

And you love whatever you see. You, there's a sense of no longer separateness. You love it.

And there's a joy that comes with seeing that, but the joy is there because you're in touch with yourself. So that is, again, an aspect of the balance between being and doing, to be aware of being while you do. And even when you're not doing something, not to lose consciousness.

The danger is when you do activities, let's say your normal work situation, a little bit more complex than putting away clothes, the danger is that you lose yourself in the activity. And so you're no longer rooted in being, you're out there. And then the sign, the clear sign, signal that you are out there and lost yourself in it is something arises like stress, anxiety, some negative reactivity, some belief that something out there is terribly important that needs to be done now and nothing else matters.

So you lose yourself in the doing. Now, if you sit quietly in your room, the danger is that you drift off to sleep. At first, you're there present, you're above thought.

And then before you know it, you can observe it. Many years ago, I spent some time occasionally in one Buddhist monasteries and you can observe the early morning meditation, especially when the monks sit 4.30, 5 o'clock. Sitting for an hour for the early morning meditation.

Now, I must have been not meditating all the time because occasionally I opened my eyes and looked at the monks. And so at first, they're always there. And then after 15, 20 minutes, some of them go.

And of course, in a Zen monastery, you have the head monk who may hit you if he sees you're drifting off. That works. So don't overdo the being, not doing anything.

So do it. Sometimes don't say, I'm not going to sit for one hour in this room and be. No, just take it as it comes.

There's a time for being and there's a time for doing. Now, many humans alive now are actually feel very uncomfortable with just being. They can't do it.

They can't do the being. Or when they're trying to be, they're trying to do the being, which is like trying to do the meditation. You can't do a meditation because the meditation is about being.

Doing a meditation implies you want to get somewhere. But true meditation is you are

somewhere. You go into the vertical dimension.

So many humans are very uncomfortable with silence. Can't stand it. Need some noise.

Or they need continuous sensory or mental stimulation. Need something to get my mental teeth into. And when they don't have it, they were very restless.

The worst thing that you could do to them is put them in a room where they have no devices to produce noise. That would be hell for many humans these days. Sense deprivation of noise.

So not with you though, because all of you are comfortable with being and with the absence of noise. And you're actually appreciative of silence. It's precious and it's beautiful.

Now you wouldn't want to have it all the time. No, there needs to be a balance between noise and silence and between thinking and not thinking and doing and being. Some ancient cultures who are not yet lost in mental development, like our more advanced, so-called more advanced culture, some ancient cultures, the people have a natural ability to just be and they're not uncomfortable with being.

It was reported by when North America, the Europeans came and settled in North American continent. I remember reading one doctor or somebody observed people lining up somewhere in the States for a doctor's appointment. And some of them were Europeans who had come to America and some were native Americans.

And it took so long, the doctor was overburdened with work. And these people, there were not enough chairs. People had to line up a long way.

And whether it was a doctor or nurse who wrote about it, observed that all the Europeans became increasingly restless and then they got very angry. What's going on? I've been here now for three hours.

And all the native Americans were just completely happy with just standing there. So the person who wrote it was so amazed that he wrote about it. So there's a natural ability to drop in and go still.

Now, then the Westerners came. And then of course there was a clash between the old culture of the native Americans and the mind-dominated culture of the West. And then many of the native Americans became very confused and became very destructive for that culture.

Now, when we go there, we have been through the development of the intellectual faculty and the mental faculty, and we come out the other end and then we encounter that ability again and even more deeper. If you haven't lost something, don't appreciate

it that much and you don't even know it that much. So for thousands of years, humans could actually drop into stillness, I'm sure, as these native Americans could.

They could drop into stillness quite easily. Perhaps they were fighting one moment and the next moment they go. In the same way that a duck does it, as I describe in the power of now, the ducks get into a fight.

And then two minutes later, flap their wings completely back into stillness. But they didn't even know, they just did it. They didn't know they did it.

But once when you lose something and then you regain it, there's always an element of depth to it that wasn't there before, because then you knowingly go into the stillness. It's not a natural thing anymore, it's a knowing thing. That is probably the meaning of the parable of the prodigal son in the New Testament that Jesus tells, which actually I believe goes back to pre-Jesus times.

The son who squanders his father's wealth and then he becomes poor. He goes abroad and then doesn't even remember who he is until finally the father sends messengers who find him and tell him who he is. Then he regains his place as the father's son and the father loves him more deeply now than before.

So that's how the story goes. He was lost and then he is found. So whenever you lose something and then you find it, there's a deeper appreciation.

For example, another ancient cult just lived in oneness with nature. But it was so natural, there was no question, there was nothing else except in oneness with nature. Nobody was not living in oneness with nature.

So they didn't know they lived in oneness with nature, they just did. So now we lost that connectedness with nature and then those of us who are awakening spiritually find it, regain it, and at a deeper level where they're acutely aware of the preciousness and the sacredness of nature. So when you transcend something and then you regain something that was lost a long time ago, there's always an added dimension to it.

That's, as I mentioned the other day, that's the fool whose mind is not highly developed. So-called fool is not a fool, but fool, then comes an intellectual development, he's no longer a fool. And then intellectual, mental development reaches a critical stage where it's no longer helpful.

And then transcend that, and then there's a sage. And the sage and the fool have many things in common. One of them being that they don't think that much anymore.

Well, the fool doesn't think that much yet, the sage doesn't think that much anymore. No superfluous thinking, and the thinking that happens doesn't cause any unhappiness anymore. You don't believe every thought that comes into your head.

What a relief. Just spending time with one thing can be very helpful. One flower, one plant, one tree, and become aware of its silent presence.

It just is, and how deeply rooted it is in being. Something that humans left thousands and thousands of years ago. They went into differentiation away from home.

And now we've refined it. Home, I wonder if it is a coincidence that the English word home sounds very much like, ohm, ohm. We do know that many European languages have roots in Sanskrit.

How that happens, nobody knows. That's why they're called Indo-European languages. And so Sanskrit is a very, of course a language no longer has been out of use for thousands of years, but how Sanskrit created words in the European languages, there must have been a deep connection a long time ago.

Ek, by the way, E-C-K means one in Sanskrit. That's lucky. Maybe one degree cooler might be a good thing.

Perhaps one and a half. We're all comfortable with being, which means you're not waiting for anything. In the old consciousness, the predominant state is one of waiting for the next thing.

And in the new consciousness, even when you're waiting somewhere, you're not really waiting. You're just being where you are. And you can use every opportunity when there is an external waiting.

You're waiting at the airline counter or a bus, at the traffic light, at the supermarket. To meet somebody, you have an appointment, somebody to arrive. So much waiting.

I read somewhere that the average person who learns, who starts driving at the age of 20 and drives a car every day throughout their lives, how they worked it out, I don't know. They spend, I believe it was four or five days of their life waiting at a red light. If you sum it, add it all up, it's four or five days of your life, you spend waiting at the red traffic light.

And most people are not happy. Unless it's just one instance of waiting and so many other occasions when you are waiting. And mostly people are not comfortable with waiting.

They get restless, uneasy, complain. They shouldn't be waiting. Well, maybe not, but you are waiting.

Things should be different if people only were more efficient and punctual and did their job properly and were aware of the time, but they're not. So whenever you're waiting, see if you can, your state of consciousness can be one of just being present, enjoy being

where you are. Start with a supermarket.

And if you once, if you notice the shift from the restlessness and discontent and complaining, the anger, even irritation with having to wait at the supermarket and then say, okay, is that a pleasant state? Do I really want, am I, is it possible to be here in a different way? Do I choose to be in that unpleasant state?

Am I forced to be in that unpleasant state? Is somebody forcing me to be irritated? No, I'm just irritated.

I can't help it. Well, that's just a thought that may not be true. I can't help it.

And then you realize that you can help it and you simply drop your irritation and come into the present moment. Irritation is just a thought. This should not be happening.

Or I'd rather be out of here than in here, but you're in here. And this is just a tiny thing, of course, but as we mentioned before, life is made up of tiny things. And if one tiny irritation is followed by another tiny irritation somewhere else and followed by another tiny irritation somewhere else, and every tiny irritation leaves behind something and energy and that gradually it builds up and then you get more prone to irritation and not just irritation, then add up 100 little irritations and then you become a potentially angry person which was waiting for the next thing to be angry about.

Hopefully you can find something to be angry about. So you can just drop it. You drop it by realizing it's futile.

You're actually creating it yourself. It serves no purpose. There's an underlying assumption, and this is a childlike way of looking at the world or a childish way of looking at the world, an immature childish world that says, if I get really irritated, things are going to change.

In the same way, a child might think if I cry hard enough, something will happen. And of course, in the case of a child, often it is the case where the parents come running. But if you're an adult and you cry hard enough, not necessarily cry as such, but metaphorically speaking, unhappy, you believe the same thing is going to happen, but it's not.

In fact, people run away from you. They don't come and say, oh, you have that energy of get away from me. Yeah.

So if you're, it's practiced with those little things, so you can not only be free of irritation, you can also be actually use those opportunities to be present. Then you're welcome every time you're waiting. And if you don't succeed, that's okay occasionally, but you're welcome every time you go, oh.

Well, one very small anecdote happened to me recently. I was at a supermarket waiting

and the cashier was the slowest that I've ever seen, perhaps in my entire life. And not only did she not know what she was doing, she also engaged every customer in a long conversation.

And even I, who is usually okay with these things, could feel a small amount of irritation creeping up and then immediately I let it out and it went away. And then another one came. But by the time I reached, finally reached her, the irritation fortunately was gone and I was present again.

And when she saw me, she said, oh, I've been waiting to meet you all my life. And I was so glad that the irritation wasn't there anymore. And she said also that she hadn't been there for very long, not worked there for a long time yet, so she's still learning.

And she had recently moved back to Canada from after spending 10 years in Maui, Hawaii, where time is not so important, of course. People have a loose relationship with time. It's island time.

So that was an interesting encounter. So it can happen. Irritation can still arise.

You don't catch, you don't catch it. So you have to be alert so that you catch it before it takes you over. And then realize you don't want it.

What for? And it's gone. Related to that is unhappiness.

A lot of so-called unhappiness is also a childish way of trying to change things by being as unhappy as you can about them. And the underlying unconscious or semi-conscious assumption is if I'm really unhappy, somebody, perhaps God, is going to do something about it, or I'm going to prove him wrong. I'm going to show him how dreadful it is.

And then finally, this is an unconscious assumption behind the unhappiness, because you believe, if you're habitually and frequently unhappy, you believe that it has a purpose. It's an underlying assumption. Perhaps you wouldn't verbalize it in that way, but you believe that it works for you.

Of course it doesn't, but things are going to change. But just need to be really unhappy so that God finally, even if you don't believe in God, this can still be the mechanism, the underlying unconscious assumption behind it, it's something that's going to happen. And of course the opposite is true because the more unhappy you are with something, the more you're stuck in the situation.

Whereas a friend of mine said, when a relationship ended, she said, and he walked off into the sunset, she said, God, this time you've gone too far. And now I'm going to show you how unhappy I can be. And she was a Buddhist.

They don't talk about God usually, but in this case, God was there. Okay, it's supposed to

be questions, so I need to stop talking. And well, I will still be talking, but please, relevant questions are preferable to irrelevant questions.

An example of a irrelevant question would be, why do you always wear these boring clothes? Don't you have a fashion advisor? What did you have for breakfast this morning?

So, and relevant questions are questions to do with your presence practice, and how your presence practice is related to certain situations in your life, or how things are going for you here. And even if you don't have a question, but just have a contribution to say, talk about your state of consciousness here, that's all fine, that's all relevant, because those questions really, almost everybody will find them interesting, and the answers, almost everybody will find them helpful, because most human difficulties in this realm or dilemmas are universal, so you can always, most answers apply to almost everyone.

[Speaker 3] (1:33:10 - 1:33:12)

Firstly, thank you for coming back to Australia.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:13 - 1:33:13)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (1:33:15 - 1:33:41)

My question is to do with people's connection to guides or angelic forces, or people that have passed on, and I just would like to know your thoughts on that, and they don't need to be proven either. And I saw your lizard, too.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:41 - 1:33:42)

Sorry?

[Speaker 3] (1:33:42 - 1:33:44)

And I saw your lizard today, too.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:44 - 1:33:45)

You did?

[Speaker 3] (1:33:45 - 1:33:46)

Yes, and I took a photo for you.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:46 - 1:33:47)

Oh, send him to me.

[Speaker 3] (1:33:47 - 1:34:12)

Oh. Just before you answer, before you were talking about the lizard today, I arrived, and they were talking about the koalas in the trees, so I've been going, please, koala, come to me, come to me, and I think you just gotta get your vibration right. So I got the lizard, and a small snake.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:12 - 1:34:28)

Well, the koalas apparently are asleep most of the time, and occasionally they wake up and munch something, and then they go back to sleep. Also, they are not terribly interested in procreation, apparently.

[Speaker 4] (1:34:31 - 1:34:33)

I only want to see it.

[Speaker 3] (1:34:34 - 1:34:37)

I'm not interested in their private life.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:39 - 1:34:45)

Do you have any experience with guides, spirit guides?

[Speaker 3] (1:34:46 - 1:34:57)

No, it's in relation to my own business, actually, and I have a lot of people that come in and question that, so I just, yeah, it's just bringing the best possible truth.

[Speaker 1] (1:34:58 - 1:52:28)

Yes, yes. Well, some people seem to have contact with different entities that are not physically embodied, and there's no doubt that there are entities that are not physically embodied. There are lots of guides, those entities, who are also pretending to be somebody else, and the main criterion is what is the quality of the information that you are getting, rather than trying to figure out who they really are, and this also applies to so-called channeling, when this is still quite popular, I suppose, in some places more than in others.

In the States, there's a town called Sedona, which is a New Age kind of, in Arizona, a New Age town where it seems every other inhabitant channels some kind of spirit guide, so I have seen many channeled writings, and a large percentage of them seems not all that relevant to anything. Small percentage, yes, there's something there. A prominent example is the Course in Miracles, which is not for everybody, but it is a high-quality

text, scripture, whatever you want to call it, and that was definitely channeled because the person who wrote it had an inner dictation, and she wrote down what she heard.

She did not fully understand what the dictation was saying, and she couldn't live it, the teaching, and yet the book was produced. You may have heard the saying, as far as deceased, people like that, some people think when people at the moment they are deceased, they know everything, but there's a saying that goes, just because they are dead doesn't mean they are smart. So whether you do channeling or you go to somebody who does channeling, who goes, the eyes usually close, and they go, this is so-and-so talking to you.

And whether or not it's genuine, listen to the quality of the teaching, if it is a teaching, the words, is it just, is it fictitious? Could it be information that you have to believe in, and they could say anything, and does it make any difference to your life whether or not what they say is right or wrong? Perhaps they're talking about life on those distant planets and what happens there.

It could be a science fiction novel, as far as you are concerned, but some people are so impressed by the fact that these are channeled, and they go, okay, and then what happens on those planets? Or they identify themselves as big entities from outer space. Who knows?

Ashtar, my name is Ashtar, commander of the galactic fleet. And I have come here to guide you. Okay, so what do you have to say?

And ultimately, if there is a true message that includes angels or angelic presences, it always boils down to find out who you truly are, find your connectedness with the source of all life. All true answers will come from within you. And whatever I say, verify it in your own experience.

Don't believe me. If you cannot verify it in your own experience, then it's not relevant. This is what the true guide would say.

So the great scriptures of the world, we're not, they're not the author. Some are anonymous. There's a difference between spirit guide and teaching that comes from a deep connectedness of the teacher with the source.

In that case, the teacher does not feel that it comes from an entity, but it comes from the source, not. And if an entity gives you information, where do they get that from? From the one consciousness.

So it may well be that this entity is more closer, more deeply connected to that one consciousness, but they are not separate consciousnesses. There's only one consciousness. And every guide, the one consciousness can only speak through any guide, no matter who it is, whether it's an angel or a deceased person or Ashtar,

commander of the galactic fleet.

There's only one consciousness that can speak through them. And the essence of their message needs to be, if it is to be true, find out who you are in your essence and then begin to live from the essence of who you are. So use your own insight.

And I believe you will be able to tell whether what they say is helpful or not. At the moment, I can only think of causing miracles that's of a high quality. There was a time when there was Seth, the writings of Seth, the woman channeled an entity called Seth.

Some of that is interesting and has some helpful things. It doesn't necessarily go to the deepest level. Nevertheless, there's some useful information there, but not at the deepest level.

When I speak, I don't feel that some other entity speaks through me, but I do realize that this is not the person speaking. This is consciousness using the mind, this person's mind as a vehicle and consciousness speaks through me. In that sense, what I say is also channeled.

Also, I don't know what I'm going to say next and most of the time I don't know, even before I talk, what words are going to come out of my mouth. And that connectedness is important. That is the connectedness with the source, with being, with stillness, with presence, whatever you want to call it.

And that you have that available to you also, you might not give public talks or you might at some point, and some of you already do, but in whatever area you are active in, to be connected to the source will empower you in whatever area you are active in and will make your work much more helpful to others and more empowered. You become more inspired and you become an inspiration for others, even if you sell tickets, cinema tickets or whatever, it doesn't matter. Everything becomes transformed through your connectedness with source.

But to have that, the vital thing is to be able to access the space of no thought. And another way of calling that space of no thought, which I sometimes express by, because it's an inner space, thinking, thinking, thinking, you remember? And then you go, present.

That's the space of no thought. So in order to have the connectedness with source, you need to open up that space of no thought. Alertness, relaxed alertness.

It seems almost paradoxical, but they go together. Relaxed alertness. And you could also call that becoming comfortable with not knowing, because otherwise your mind always thinks it knows already.

So when you're trying to help somebody, somebody has a problem, often people will

immediately try to say something helpful. They think hard. Okay, what can I say to this person who is suffering so much?

I need to say something helpful. And then you search in your mind. And usually it's not that great, and it's not well-received by the person, and it's not that helpful.

They might say, okay, thanks. But they feel it doesn't come from any deep place within yourself. Although your intentions are good.

You're trying hard to say something helpful. But to be really helpful, you need to become comfortable with not knowing anything. And that because that the space of no thought is, you don't know anything in the space of no thought, at least not conceptually.

The miracle is that in the space of no thought, you access the source of all knowledge, but it hasn't reached concepts yet. It's potential of all knowledge, the primary source. So many people are actually afraid of going there because they're afraid of not knowing.

And so they need to keep thinking. So if you can, somebody comes to you, let's assume you have practiced already beforehand, not knowing, for example, by not labeling compulsively everything around you, but actually be present with a tree, with a sky, with another person. And so you almost, another way of putting it, you almost disappear as a person in that state of no thought because in no thought, who are you?

You're simply a presence. You're not a particular person anymore. So it's a voluntary kind of disappearing act where you as the personal entity disappear.

And there's just a space of consciousness where you were before. This sometimes happens to people who suffer greatly. They suffer so much that their ego gets destroyed and eroded.

And what's left is just a presence. And this could happen to you, but probably won't need to happen because you're already voluntarily going there. So life doesn't need to push you into it.

So to become comfortable with not knowing, let's say a person comes to you, is in suffering again, or is close to death, or somebody has just died, or they have just lost everything, whatever it may be. Or of course, it could be pseudo-suffering too. It could just be a suffering totally created by their mind.

No actual situation, just totally mind created. In which case, I naturally always have a little smile on my face. I'm not laughing at them.

I'm just smiling because I realize it's a delusion. But let's assume it's real suffering. Somebody has just died or is approaching death or has an illness.

And then instead of figuring out what can I say, you just go still and you just listen. And it

may be that no words come, but an energy, you contributed an energy to that situation. That is helpful.

That is healing. Some healing comes in healing. The deepest healing really comes in that way too.

When you access that, it's not always words that come out of that space. Sometimes a wordless emanation comes out of that space, which some people might call healing. And healing is not necessarily healing of a physical symptom.

There's a deeper level of healing that helps that other person to connect with the deepest source within themselves. And that's really the true, the ultimate and true healing. So when I was many years ago, I was many, many years ago, I was beginning to work with people who came to me for advice and counseling and so on.

And I was always naturally becoming very still. So that's, and it all came out of that. Never knew the answer beforehand.

Just get still and listen. Oh. And I may have told the story before, for a while I thought I was a healer because that was early on after my shift in consciousness when I didn't understand much.

So I was sitting with this woman who had been a Catholic nun for 15 years and then left the order because she hadn't found God yet. And she came to me and I was sitting in that state of not knowing, but being comfortable with not knowing, not being uncomfortable with not knowing because that's not pleasant and then it gets blocked immediately. And she said she could feel the energy suddenly that was flowing and she'd, oh, you are doing healing.

You're a healer. I said, oh, that's what I am. And I thought, oh, so that's what this energy is.

And then for a couple of years, the word must have spread. People called me a healer. And some people came for physical healing and some people had a pain there and the foot was hurting and can you heal my foot?

Well, I don't know. And so I, and then I realized after two years, most people who then came were just interested in getting rid of certain symptoms. They were not interested in a deeper healing.

So I made an announcement says, I am not a healer. So the main thing is what any spirit guide or angelic presence, the most essential information that he, she, it can give you is to get in touch with the source yourself. Because if they are giving, if they are highly evolved beings, they are in touch with the source.

And all their main work then must be to help you to evolve also and be in touch with the source. So these, if there are any presences, angelic or otherwise, they are not independent consciousnesses. They are evolved expressions of the one consciousness.

And whether or not they are evolved expressions or not so involved expression of the one consciousness, you will be able to tell, I believe, when you listen to what they have to say.

[Speaker 3] (1:52:31 - 1:52:33)

Thank you. Thank you so much. Thanks.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:53 - 1:55:06)

Okay, I was born in Somalia and spent first 18 years of my life there. Wonderful country from memory. Really happy, poor, but extremely happy.

Unfortunately, the war happened and my family was scattered around the world. 14 kids, one mom and dad. I ended up in Australia.

I was the lucky one. And 15 years later, I was able to support my family. So I brought one brother who ended up in England as a refugee to Australia.

And beautiful man. He's finished his master's. He's got a wonderful career in Australia and we're happy.

When he finished, I brought the second one and unfortunately, it didn't work out. He, that brother, ended up from Somalia to Syria in refugee camp and had a horrible life. Ended up in Denmark and I got him out of Denmark.

He's a Danish citizen and a good, happy life, but absolutely broke and sold. And got into trouble in university and started fighting. Ended up getting him out of police stations.

And the third time, the university kicked him out. And you know in Australia, to be kicked out of university as an international student, it's almost impossible. Because it's a full paying fee and so that happened and I sent him back to Denmark.

Now I'm ready to help the other members of the family. And two of my closest sisters when we were growing up and I miss them. They don't wanna talk to me because I have different values and beliefs to them and it breaks my heart.

But at the same time, I don't wanna give up my life. I've built here. My friends, my beautiful husband, my son.

And I'm stuck with two lives and I really miss them. I wanted to ask you, what would you do if you were in my position?

[Speaker 1] (1:55:08 - 1:55:10)

So your sisters won't talk to you?

[Speaker 2] (1:55:12 - 1:55:13)

That's right.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:13 - 1:55:14)

They live in?

[Speaker 2] (1:55:15 - 1:55:17)

Birmingham, in England.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:17 - 1:55:22)

Okay. And why is it they don't want to talk to you?

[Speaker 2] (1:55:24 - 1:56:12)

When we were living in Somalia, we were beautiful life, beautiful culture, respectful Muslim. When I came here, I've decided to follow meditation, still keep that peacefulness inside me. And they've decided to take up wearing the veil.

We didn't do that when we were in Somalia. I don't know what happened. But they now feel that I'm not part of them unless I give up my career, which I worked very hard and have the same beliefs as them.

I'm not part of them.

[Speaker 1] (1:56:24 - 3:01:10)

It sometimes happens that members of the same family evolve at very different rates. So a sense of separation can come if one member of the family evolves spiritually much more rapidly than another. And that is something that you cannot do anything about.

You need to accept that your sisters, their viewpoints and their judgments of you arise because of the way in which they have been conditioned by their culture. So this is part of the mental conditioning. There's nothing really personal about it.

They have been conditioned in a certain way. To some extent, you have gone beyond your conditioning because anybody who begins to awaken spiritually goes beyond also simultaneously, begins to go beyond their cultural conditioning. And that applies whether you're from Somalia, whether you're from Australia or whether you're in the United States or anywhere.

If you are not awakening spiritually, you are your behavior, your viewpoints, your opinions, the way in which you judge other people, the way in which you judge other cultures, all that is conditioned by the content of your mind, the culture and family and so on that you grew up in. So you are basically a conditioned entity. And your opinions and viewpoints are not really yours.

They are the product of your conditioning. And so that's the case with your sisters. So sometimes the same thing applies to close friends.

I've had many similar questions of people who had a close friendship with someone. And sometimes it's the case with a husband and wife. Often I've had many, in many cases, one of them, either she or he began to evolve and awaken spiritually.

And a gap suddenly arose between the one that was still totally conditioned and the one that was beginning to awaken spiritually. In some cases, they can still live together. It depends on the nature and degree of the person who is not yet awakening spiritually.

Depends that the ways in which this non-awakened state manifests differs from person to person. Some you can live with, you can awaken, and you know your partner is not, and you can totally surrender to that fact that your partner is not awakening yet. In other cases, it will create a hostility, a growing hostility in your partner.

The ego objects to the other beings becoming so different and changing, they don't understand you anymore. And so, and then a separation happens. With husband and wife, then it sometimes happens that they do their different ways.

In the case of a family member, there's a link that remains. So you cannot just say, we go our different ways. There's always a certain bond between you and your family members.

But the first thing is you ask me what I would do. What I would do is, first of all, understand why. And this is what I've just been talking about.

If you understand, then already it is a helpful thing. If you don't understand why is this happening, but if you understand that these people act out of their, your sisters act out of their conditioning, you have begun, already are in the process of transcending your conditioning. Whether or not they will also awaken or begin to awaken spiritually, we don't know.

So in the meantime, all you can do, or all I could, if I were you, all I could do was continue to recognize the limitation in them. It is, they are conditioned in their responses. Recognize that that is what happens, not to blame them for it, not to feel guilty because you make them angry, because you don't.

It's their conditioning that makes them angry. So you don't feel guilty because you are

different from them. I wouldn't, I'm talking now, but I would not feel guilty.

I would simply recognize compassionately what it is that makes them say and do the things they say and do towards you. And you cannot even explain to them. You can't, you, it would be futile to say to them, I know why you're saying that to me because you're totally conditioned.

What? They wouldn't know what you're talking about because they know nothing outside of their conditioning. So compassion arises, compassion and acceptance of a person's limitations.

You can still hold them in your heart and realize there is an essence in them that is lovable and you can continue to be connected to that essence of who they are. If they refuse to talk to you, then you have to accept and surrender that. You can hold them in your meditation.

You can even sometimes look at their photo, look beyond the surface appearance of who they are. And the photo can be a little help to establish the inner connection. Then you don't need the photo anymore to establish the inner connection, feel the inner connection with their innermost selves.

And even if they don't talk to you, that can still be there. And then you send, in the conventional new age language, you send loving energy to them. There's some truth in that.

So there's a loving, still a loving connection even though you don't talk. So recognition to summarize, recognition of why this is happening, accepting your family member's limitations and not judging them. They judge you, of course, because their judgments of you are part of their conditioning, but you don't need to judge them.

You simply see that this is a limitation of their state of consciousness at this present time. They will awaken too. In time, eventually, this lifetime or the next.

So then you can begin to feel peaceful about it so that it does not become a source of suffering, continuous source of suffering at the back of your mind. So if you can be in a loving relationship, even though you might not meet them much anymore or at all, you can stay in a state of love towards them, compassionately accept their limitations, and then see what happens. Sometimes in that way, a healing does happen.

It may be that at some point there's a crack in their conditioning and they're suddenly able to accept you, who you are for who you are now, but your happiness or fulfillment does not depend on any other human's acceptance of who you are. That would be a deluded thought. If you think you can only be happy if these people accept and understand you.

Some people have that with their parents. So they say, my dad, my father, they don't understand me at all. It's terrible, terrible.

I'm trying to explain what I add. Of course they cannot understand you. It's beyond their comprehension if you have awakened spiritually and they haven't.

So compassionately accept that they cannot understand you instead of trying to explain yourself to them, just be there in a loving way with them when you meet for Christmas or Thanksgiving and you hear all the judgments coming at you from them. You should have, why don't you look where it's taken you, look at your sister, she married a millionaire and you are into that weird kind of meditation stuff that's not getting you anywhere. Whatever judgments come, say, okay, I know that this is what you think and feel and I think and feel differently, that's all.

So you don't need to justify accepting people's limitations and suddenly realizing whether or not your father, your mother, your sister, your brother, or anybody else close to you accepts you for who you are is really not, you become free of the need to be accepted, but you can nevertheless have a deeper connection. Keep that deeper connection and connectedness with them. That's what I would do.

There's quite a, there's been some sports people who were apparently greatly helped by this teaching and more recently, oh, I forgot to contact her. I was going to contact her. She got in the Winter Olympics, she got the gold medal in, what was it?

Snowboarding. Snowboarding, it has another name. It's a new discipline in the Winter Olympics.

The half, what? Half pipe? I don't know, but anyway, it's a kind of snowboarding.

They go up on this thing and they go into the air and turn and go around and then finally they land. It's an amazing thing. And she was an American young woman and she got the gold medal.

And then she said what helped her greatly was the power of now reading that and she traveled with that book. And that's always wonderful to see. And there've been other cases where sports people reported being helped greatly by simply becoming present in what they do.

That's no matter what you do, it will help greatly to do it better or to stop doing it. So presence will improve what you do or will take you away from what you're doing. You can't know that beforehand.

As for let's see what happens to the tobacco company employees. There's a movie about, there was a book written many years ago by Dan Millman called Peaceful Warrior. And Dan Millman was also, he was a gymnast and I believe he also was at the Olympics

years ago.

And he wrote a book about learning to be more present and then performing better and changing his life at the same time. It's partly fact and it's a mixture of fact and fiction. So there is a fictitious character but it's all based on his life.

And they made a movie out of that. It's also called Peaceful Warrior, which unfortunately was not successful. The critics didn't like it, but I did.

And if you get a chance to see it, I would recommend that you watch it. Some, because there are moments in that movie where they really get the viewer to identify with the protagonist who is learning to find what the meaning of presence. So there were wonderful instances in the movie when the protagonist suddenly becomes present and how it is done with a camera.

It's beautiful. So if you can watch it, Peaceful Warrior. Welcome to another live meditation.

If you think that we are doing something here, doing a meditation that can become a big obstacle to actually entering the state of meditation, the notion that you're doing something. One minute you're doing, you're answering the emails and then you are putting the dishes away and then you're doing the meditation. And every doing has a certain aim.

You're doing in order to get it done, get it over with, achieve the goal. So in doing involves time. Can't do anything without time.

And the ordinary state of consciousness is always involved in time, inseparable from time. There's a deeper dimension within you that could be called timeless. But as long as you're doing something to get there, that becomes a paradox.

You can't use time to get to the timeless because you don't need to get to the timeless. It's already there in you. You just need to notice that it's there.

So that removes all sense of doing. All you need to do, so to speak, it's not a doing. It's a notice right now that there's a deeper dimension in you, deeper than the physical, that which you perceive through your senses, deeper than thinking, deeper than the emotions, emotional layers.

Where is it? I still can't feel it. Somebody thinks.

Become aware that you are. Become aware of the beingness of yourself. Aware of your own presence.

Thinking doesn't help you here. It actually prevents you from dropping down into the core of your being. So you can allow yourself to let go of thinking or trying to figure

something out.

Become aware that right now you are conscious. Right now you are aware. And in the gap between two thoughts, there's a space or a spaciousness.

And in that spaciousness, in that space, you are aware, you are conscious without any particular content. You are conscious of consciousness, that which is prior to all content, but not separate from, deeper than all content, but not separate from all the content of your mind. Whatever you are aware of, sense perceptions, thinking, emotions, all these things you are aware of, in many cases, not just aware of, identified with, because you derive your sense of self from those things.

I have situations which you are aware of through your sense perceptions, plus mental interpretations, plus emotional reflections. That makes up the content of your consciousness. And that makes up what you call your life.

That's my life. And you try to figure out your life by thinking about your life. There is a place for that too, yes.

If that's all there is to your life, however, then you are, to use one of my favorite analogies, you are like a wave or ripple on the surface of the ocean who does not realize that it is not only a wave or ripple on the surface of the ocean, being surrounded by other waves or ripples, but this wave or ripple does not realize that it is also, and more fundamentally, the entire ocean. And that this wave or ripple is only temporarily a manifestation of the entire ocean. Hmm.

Somebody once said, I believe it was Alan Watts, said something like, you are something that the universe is doing in the same way that the wave is something that the ocean is doing. So you are something that the universe is doing or being. And if you can realize that rather than just thinking, oh, that's an interesting idea.

Let me think about that. I'm something that the universe is doing in the same way that the wave is something that the ocean is doing. You can start thinking about it.

That's one way you might come up with a few more related ideas. Or the mind might say, well, this may be true or may not be true. Or the mind might say, that doesn't make sense to me.

Or I have no idea what he's talking about. Now, like with all statements that point to a spiritual dimension, they are just pointers. And they're to be used as pointers, signposts.

So if you can get even just a little taste or a glimpse experientially of what this means, and perhaps you can do it by visualizing just yourself as a wave or ripple on the surface of the universe, the surface of the ocean, just to keep the analogy. And allow yourself to drop into the core of your being in the space between two thoughts and realize your

essential beingness. I am no particular content as such, but you feel connected to something limitless, timeless, vast, deep.

You're not only connected with it, you are an extension of it, an expression of it, inseparable from it. You have to have the courage in order to experience that, to realize that, the courage to enter the realm of not knowing anything and of not being anybody in particular. That's the most beautiful experience, if you want to call it that.

It's deeper than experience. The most beautiful realization, the most liberating realization, that you are not just this little person, which is just like a brief, momentary spark that appears and then disappears. Oh, that was you, that was me.

So every human being, a brief, momentary spark of light is born and dies, so to speak, goes. Oh, that was it. Yes.

And all over the planet, new sparks are born of consciousness, beings, human beings. Right now, at this very moment, new sparks are rising, right now. They're all going, choop, choop, choop, choop, choop, choop.

And right now, other sparks are extinguished, choop, choop, choop, choop, choop, choop. And each little spark has a name attached to it. That gives the impression that there's something permanent there.

Well, that spark originates in the central fire, the central consciousness. Each spark is a manifestation of that and returns there. So the most liberating thing is for you to become aware that there's more to you than the person, that you are connected with that depth within yourself.

And that is the universe, not just the sense-perceived universe and galaxies and so on, but more essentially something deeper that underlies the sense-perceived universe. But as I said, you need to have the courage to step into the unknown, become comfortable with not knowing anything. Don't worry, all the things that you know, when you need them, you can still use.

But to know who you are, essentially, you need to become comfortable with not knowing anything, become comfortable with not knowing who you are conceptually, become comfortable with being ignorant, so to speak. And then something that cannot be known emerges. You can't know it because it's the source of all knowledge, where all knowing and all knowledge originates.

That's you cannot know it, but it knows itself through you. With that realization, one could say that not only you become deeper, you deepen. The universe deepens.

The universe has two movements. It expands in two directions. That's one way of putting it.

There are other ways of putting it. It expands externally into multiplicity and greater complexity and differentiation. If you look at life on the planet, it's involved in an explosive expansion from mineral life to vegetable life, to animal life, to human life, all different levels of consciousness, becoming more and more differentiated, more complex, more interesting.

Life on the planet here is certainly more interesting than it was a billion years ago. So it expands into form, the creation of form. The universe delights in creating forms, life forms, experiences, even drama.

Otherwise there wouldn't be drama. The universe also wants to expand, so to speak, internally. So there's a corresponding movement into yourself.

There's more depths to you. That's the inner expansion, one could say, although you might choose to use a completely different word for that. There's the outer.

And then there's the inner deepening of the universe. So if you have this courage to go into the unknown by relinquishing thought when it's not needed, taking thought up again, of course, when you want it, it's a wonderful, wonderful tool the universe created. But connect with the depths within yourself, the primordial, undifferentiated, unconditioned, timeless consciousness that underlies the entire universe.

And then you can begin to realize the truth of this statement. The universe, I am something that the universe is doing. The unconditioned intelligence can then act through you.

And you become co-creator. Then being and doing come together in your life, which means you no longer compulsively do things, compulsively go into doing and doing and doing. Part of that is thinking, thinking, thinking, an addiction, must think, think, think.

You no longer compulsively do. There's the ability to just be in that timeless moment, to appreciate this moment, the depths of it, the aliveness of it, within and without, but not having separate compartments anymore in your life of this is my spiritual time, don't disturb me, but to bring the two together. So when you're engaged in doing and thinking, the unconditioned consciousness can operate through you.

It can do and inspire you, inspire your thinking, your activities, empower, inspire, whatever it is that you do. So ultimately, you don't have a separate existence. It's an illusion.

You're an expression of the totality of the one consciousness, every human, every life form, everything is an expression of the one underlying consciousness. That's your essential identity. So by inviting that spaciousness, inner spaciousness, the gap between two thoughts into your life, dropping into that spaciousness, the core of who you are, the beingness of you, you realize that you are the entire universe, not the multiplicity of it,

you're not that which underlies the multiplicity of it.

And that's called self-realization. So the spiritual awakening is really that, it's a liberation from a limited, ultimately false sense of self, of who you are. And there's such freedom in that, suddenly you're, oh, many desires, all the things that occupy your mind, the heaviness of your life, it's all to do with the limited sense of who you are.

So that's, of course, presence is another word for that state of realization. You realize that you are the presence, the consciousness, the conscious presence. And there's a joy in that realization, a peace, but an alive peace, not a dead, deadened, deadening peace, an alive peace.

So the real happiness, if you even want to use that word, originates within you. This comes from the realization of who you are. And it's not caused by external circumstances.

And that's why often people have realized it when their life circumstances were very limiting or unpleasant, people have realized it in a prison cell, in a hospital bed, in the face of great loss, disaster, imminent death, and suddenly they dropped into the core of their being. One expression for that is the ego died. The false sense of self died.

It became too painful to sustain the false sense of self. It could not sustain itself any longer. That's a possibility of grace to use a traditional word.

That's the grace that's hiding behind every disaster, the possibility of it. And the acceleration comes when a human being voluntarily disidentifies from who they are on the level of form and realizes who they are in the depths of your being. And that realization is not conceptual.

You don't know anything, but you can, we don't even have a word to describe it. We can, you can sense it, be it. So when you voluntarily enter that dimension of depth within yourself, that's a great acceleration in consciousness.

Otherwise, life would eventually force you to go there through disaster, suffering, and so on, loss. And this is possible for humans now because humanity as a whole has already gone through enormous suffering over many millennia, but many still need to go that way. They're not ready to even hear this.

These words would be still meaningless to many humans on the planet, and that's okay. So for the rest of your incarnation here, the practice is to bring, yes, to drop into being and when you do, to bring the being dimension into the doing so that there's no loss of connectedness with being. So there's the pieces in the background and then you act.

The doing becomes infused with a sense of being, which means there's no stress in the doing anymore, but there can be enormous effectiveness when you're connected with a

deeper dimension within yourself because it then acts through you, not the little me that needs this and that. It acts through you. Some people connected with it almost accidentally and they became, they are regarded as the great artists, composers, the scientists, those who had the deep, sudden insights.

They almost accidentally or accidentally connected with that dimension and it, all those things that could be considered sublime creations of human beings are humans who momentarily were able to drop into that unconditioned consciousness and it then expressed itself through the human mind and gave birth to enormous creativity. So the expression that I use, getting lost in doing, that's still the destiny of many humans. They are lost in their minds, identified with every thought.

And then of course that gives rise to activities and then they're lost in the activities. What's next? No, this, this, think.

Totally uncentered, disconnected. Every little thing has the power to upset them. Oh no, not this.

What's going to happen next? Oh no. So the practice is being and doing as one.

And sometimes being predominates and then you, it's not, you don't need to do continuously. Sometimes you just love being out in nature or sitting in your room or traveling while you're traveling. Feel the beingness of yourself and contemplate the world around you.

And it's amazing. And then doing can predominate. Suddenly you need to really focus on that, but there can still be a connectedness with the stillness in the background, the deeper dimension.

That's the main, that's the one thing that matters absolutely to have that. Everything is maybe important, but it's all relatively important. And as Jesus said to this woman who was very concerned with doing, with activities, and her sister, I believe, Mary, was only concerned with being.

She was listening to the spiritual teacher. And Martha, the active, the doing one, said to Mary, come on, you've got so many things to do. Come on, we need to get on with it.

We've got food to prepare. We've got to do this and that. And Jesus said, well, Mary has chosen the one thing that really, that matters.

He doesn't say, he didn't say you shouldn't be doing anything anymore. Just wanted to point to what the very foundation for everything is, the being dimension, to be aware of that, because that's why that is the one thing that matters. And everything in your life may be important, as I said before, whether you are wealthy or poor, or whether you have a good relationship or bad relationships, whether you're healthy or not healthy, or

where you live, whether you live in a home as in a tent, or live in a mansion, these things are relatively important, but not absolutely important.

There's only one thing that is of absolute importance.

[Speaker 4] (3:01:13 - 3:01:44)

And this is it. Thanks.

[Speaker 1] (3:02:48 - 3:12:10)

Welcome to our retreat. You made it. You're here despite everything.

And if you're here, and if you're still here a week from now, that means that you are already undergoing a transformation of consciousness. I'm saying, if you're still here a week from now, because it's possible that one or two people could be here for ego reasons, but they wouldn't be able to stand it, not for a whole week. It would become unbearable.

Wouldn't be able to stand the stillness and most of all, wouldn't be able to stand yourself because whoever is still under the control of ego is running always somewhere else. Is not at ease with who they are, where they are and what is. Never at ease.

And so they won't be at ease here either. If the pattern inside your head is to be ill at ease, how could you be at ease here? And very quickly you would find reasons to justify to yourself and others your state of not being at ease.

If you're looking for excuses for not being at ease in the now, the only place there is, you can always find them wherever you go. You could say, I didn't come here for bad weather. Not knowing that by attaching that label, that thought, you've taken the weather out of the totality because within the totality, the so-called bad weather, which isn't bad at all, is inseparable from the beauty that surrounds you here.

It feeds it. But mind takes it out of the totality and takes it out and separates one little fragment and calls it something, unaware that it is part of the totality. And weather is only a tiny example of that.

You take anything that happens to you, any condition that arises is part of the totality. And when you judge it, call it this or that, and even call it good. Even good weather.

Why call it anything? It is as it is. If you call it good, then you must have bad weather because you can't have good weather without bad weather because otherwise the word good doesn't make sense anymore.

And I'm only taking weather as a small example. So these are conditions that arise continuously. If you want to use them, if the mind, the egoic mind, wants to use them for

its own purposes, which is to be right, to make something or someone wrong, to enhance your sense of self through resisting and complaining, you can always find excuses, reasons, but they are never the true reasons.

There's a beautiful lesson in the Course in Miracles that says, I'm never upset for the reason I think. I am never upset for the reason I think. So that, of course, means to be upset is part of the structure of the egoic mind.

You're not in touch with the depth of who you are the essence of your being. You're not in touch with the depth of the present moment, which is inseparable from the depth of who you are. And that's why you're upset.

And then little things happen and you go, then that permanent state of being upset comes out. It's just waiting to say, ah, that's why I'm upset. Now I know why I'm so unhappy.

There's a bug in my bed. So these are, now I'm not saying the fact that you are already, you're here because you are undergoing a transformation of consciousness does not necessarily mean that you are entirely free, entirely free yet of those mind structures, egoic structures, because your ability to be rooted within the depths of being, which is the depths of yourself and the depths of the present moment, inseparable, your ability to be, to dwell within yourself, to rest within your very being, that's the only thing that could redeem you from the state of being upset, unhappy, fearful, that may still, in some of you, occasionally become obscured by mind waves and by the old structures, which still have a certain momentum within you. They are collective human mind structures that has been around for a long time.

And so you may find yourself occasionally during this week that we are here together, you may find yourself, or you may already have found yourself in the short time that you have been here, becoming upset with this, that, or the other. And that's nothing personal. You don't need to feel, oh, he caught me, I got him, it's nothing personal.

And it is quite possible that from time to time, you will find yourself entering the state, I'm using that word that is used in the course in miracles, you're upset one way or another, fearful, anxious, complaining, sad, doubting. Emotions and mind waves come and say, this is, I feel that because of this, this is doing this because of that. And then perhaps you'll remember, I'm never upset for the reason I think.

Oh, and then, that's a little pointer. It works like a bell.

[Speaker 4] (3:12:11 - 3:12:13)

Ding. And.

[Speaker 1] (3:12:16 - 3:22:25)

And so sometimes the bell that I occasionally use is a spiritual alarm clock. It says, step out of your state of being identical and identified with thinking and emotions. Step out and be present and see your thoughts and emotions.

That's the spiritual alarm clock because awakening means to awaken out of the old mental emotional patterns. And so a bell can fulfill that function. That's why in some monasteries, they use it quite a lot.

Or a stick that the master in a Zen monastery uses to hit you, that can work too. Or a little pointer like, I'm never upset for the reason I think. And then you suddenly, that awakens you out of your identification with a reaction, the mental emotional reaction that was ego, that was me.

And then you see it. And then you see the situation isn't really that important. And you see the real reason why you're upset is you've lost touch with yourself.

Or another way of putting it, you've lost touch with the present moment. You're not fully aligned internally with what is now. So, and not being aligned internally with whatever form this moment takes means not being in touch with life.

Because at this moment, life is taking this form. It's not going to last, forms never last. But at this moment, life is taking this form.

To be aligned with a deeper life that is beyond form, you need to be first of all aligned with the form that life takes. Instead of rejecting the form and saying, I'm looking for the real life, but not this. So that's a little secret.

And that's something to be particularly practiced, to be aware of here, to be aligned, to be in touch with being who you are or what you are beyond the conditioned entity, conditioned by the past, mentally, emotional conditioning, a bundle of mental, emotional conditioning. That's to most people, that's who they think they are. They speak out of that.

They react out of that. They interact and so on, and are upset a lot of the time out of that. So to be aligned with who you are beyond that, the unconditioned, the being that you are, that which is so hard to put into words, because words come from this world of forms.

And we are now pointing towards the formless dimension in yourself, not the form, not the physical form, and certainly not the psychological form of me. It's a temporary formation, nothing wrong with it. It's a temporary formation like a cloud or a snowflake.

No human is the same on the planet. And they say, I mean, they look at snowflakes through the microscope. Not one snowflake is the same as any other snowflake, and yet it only survives for a short time.

So to be aligned with who you are, and that's the only thing that can free you from the state of being unhappy, which is structural, not caused ultimately by conditions, because I have met people in the worst of conditions, physical or otherwise, who were absolutely at peace inside. So it's not that. Life.

Jesus said, I want you to have life, and I want you to have it more abundantly. True, abundant life, which is not to do with quantities, forms of life, but life itself. To be in touch with the life that you are, which is one with the life that is at the heart of the universe.

You could also call it God, if the word had not been misused so much. To enter life, you have to first of all enter, and life by life we mean here, not a form of life, but the formless, timeless one life of which you are a temporary expression. To know that, that is the purpose of your being here, that is the purpose of the universe.

It wants to know itself through you. To know that one life that you are, a condition for that is not being at odds with the forms of life, the form that life takes at this moment, because that's the only place where life can take form. So to bring an inner alignment to whatever condition arises at this moment, either an external condition or an internal condition.

Oh, this is how it is. Doesn't mean you can't take action. If you're in bed cold, your pajama isn't thick enough, you thought you were coming to a warmer climate.

Well, if you arrived, by the way, if you arrived this evening, you'll be surprised how hot it is tomorrow morning. That's how it seems to go every day. Of course, you can ask for a blanket.

You can say, okay, I need to accept this moment. I'm not going to ask for a blanket. If there's something you can change, let's you take a step.

But the action that you take already arises out of an inner alignment, not out of being upset. Because if you run to the reception or wherever you go and you're already upset because the egoic entity used the fact that you were not warm enough in your bed or in your tent, used that as another justification for being upset, just its normal condition, came up again and said, this is why. Of course it's not.

It's only a blanket. Or it's only a little cold. And then you go, and then they will either tell you, yes, here it is, or they tell you, no, we've run out of blankets.

There are too many people here. We don't have that many blankets. And then you go, oh.

Now you can see the egoic entity would have another reason for being even more upset. And in that, strengthen its sense of self, which is a total illusion. Its illusory sense of me

gets strengthened through the upset.

And then it runs and you talk to your next one. You know what? They don't even have enough blankets.

And then perhaps at that moment, if you remember, I'm never upset for the reason I think. And of course, I'm never upset for the reason I think means I'm upset because I've lost the present moment. I'm not aligned with the form that this moment takes.

That's all. If I were aligned internally, if I said, that's how it is, I've taken action that didn't work, and then I can ask somebody else about some blankets, or find some other means of covering myself, or I find nothing and I'm simply shiver in bed. And that is not that bad either.

If you lived in a Zen monastery, you would shiver for years. And they can't complain.

[Speaker 4] (3:22:25 - 3:22:39)

Well, they can not only in the head, but they can't go to the master and complain.

[Speaker 1] (3:22:39 - 3:40:11)

You idiot, go out. And he's not insulting, he's hoping to break your mind identification. Sometimes it works, but most of the time it doesn't.

So you work with whatever arises. That's the raw material for our retreat. Whatever condition arises, external or internal.

And so if you couldn't find the blister just to stay for one moment with that situation, you then spend a night feeling a little cold. And then that's a good opportunity for not mentally labeling it and not even saying I'm cold, cold. That makes it far worse.

And you're feeling upset and in that you feel good. The ego feels good about that. The strange thing is that the ego, what is bad for the organism, being upset the body doesn't like it, it interferes with the flow of energy through the body.

But to the ego, it's great to be upset. The more upset, the stronger I feel. And so whatever condition arises is as it is at this moment.

Nobody could argue with that except the ego. Whatever arises at this moment is as it is. And if you can recognize that fact, suddenly life becomes very simple because it's the simplicity of the present moment which you can always deal with.

It's always really quite simple. Either you take action or you let it be. If action is necessary or possible, action happens.

But it doesn't arise anymore out of the ego which really is looking to enhance itself

through the action to make itself right and somebody else wrong. If action is possible or necessary, it happens. If no action is possible, there's a simple beautiful acceptance of this moment as it is.

And that is the inner alignment with this moment. So confusion leaves you because confusion is to do with being out of the moment and trying to work something out about your past and your future and how they two hang together. How can I make it work, my life story?

And I've got, okay, then you're like, I may have 20 years left and I've got to make it work. And you neglect the primary where life is found, the present moment. So people are trying to make their life work or find their life purpose in terms of future.

Where is my life purpose? And then automatically you look to the future for your life purpose. That is your secondary life purpose.

The future is your life purpose to do with this temporary form, whatever function this form fulfills. And yes, that also exists. It has its dimension also.

But primary is the purpose of, it is your purpose to be internally one with life. And that can only be found in the present moment. And if you miss that, because you're looking for some greater purpose than this, you've missed the primary, the very foundation of your life, this moment, and looking for some greater life in some future moment, which doesn't exist except as a thought.

So we are here to go deeper into this. It is the depths, it's to do with depths. That's why we may briefly touch upon what you do externally with your life.

Of course, that also, that is a dimension that is a temporary one, due as form. But nothing, it is nothing compared to the importance of being one with who you are in the depths of your being. What purpose could you possibly find if you're not one, if you're looking to the future to find that state of being one with who you are?

Who you are, not who you will be. The one with being, life, God, the now is the portal. But that's the formless dimension, but you cannot reach the formless dimension.

I'm saying it again, I will repeat it many times. You cannot be aligned with the formless eternal life that you are as long as you reject or resist or are at odds with the form that life takes at this moment. Then the form that life takes as your life situation or as a condition that arises becomes a wall, a big obstacle.

You have made it into it, it isn't, but you make then whatever situation or condition arises in your life into, and you look upon it as an obstacle, like a, oh no, this is not what I want, oh no, oh no. Something, oh no, not this again, that's not supposed to happen, that shouldn't happen. He shouldn't do that, they shouldn't, I shouldn't.

Oh no, and so you create, it's that which separates yours, you're looking, there are people who are looking for spiritual enlightenment away from what is here, they're in some, and these are people who love abstract, some abstract mental constructs about what enlightenment is and they study it for years, and then you get divisions, you can divide in 15 this and 25 that and 100 this and oh. So the form that is the condition, the form of this moment that this moment takes, if you're internally aligned, it becomes an opening. The worse it is, the wider the opening really.

So we work with that these days that we are here, bringing particular alertness, particular attention to whatever arises outside or inside. Notice your reactions, see if you can be in a state of immediate oneness with the form that life takes at this moment, immediate inner oneness. Whenever you are in immediate inner oneness, you're already a master, spiritual master.

Maybe only for that minute, maybe the next minute you're no longer at one, but that's fine. You don't need to be a master for the rest of your life, it's enough to be master of the present moment because that's all there is. Otherwise the mind comes in and says, but yeah, but I'm not going to be able to sustain this for the, so the mastery of life doesn't mean that you exert total control over everything and everybody.

Mastery means to be one with the totality, the total, the cosmos, the Tao, the flow of the universe. It's all one, it's all interconnected, the web of the one world, universe, reality. To be one with that, that's being a master.

One, so master is master of the present moment, that's all. And suddenly life becomes, is very simple. The present moment is primary in your life at any moment and whenever you forget that, you become upset.

And so you're not upset for the reason you think, you're upset because you forgot what really matters. That's all. And so it's interesting to see how many times this week you forget what really matters.

Forget yourself, forget being, forget the present moment. And the moment you realize that you forgot the present moment, you forgot what really matters. The moment you realize that, you haven't forgotten.

It's only when you don't know it, then you have truly forgotten it. Because then you're immersed in the reaction, in the old mental emotional pattern. That means you've truly forgotten and that means you're truly asleep, spiritually speaking, you're asleep.

And then you need a stronger dose, perhaps, of a stronger alarm clock. But here, of course, there are probably many because we meet here quite often and it'll be hard to stay asleep here if you're deadlocked and your door's off, that's another matter. Externally, what you do here, there is more freedom on this retreat than on some other

retreats that you may have attended.

If you have been on other retreats, not our retreats, but some other, there's some retreats, meditation retreats that are like boot camps where you have to, you sit for 10 hours a day and you meditate and then you walk and you can't even look at anybody. And I'm not saying that's bad, that could be great too. It's just, this is different, forms are different, that's all, that could take you into being too.

And here, the form is somewhat different. And to some extent, it is up to you whether on the external level, you want to have a retreat and refrain from speaking, in which case, whenever anybody approaches you, you could go and then they know that you want to be on a silent retreat. I would also like to, at some point, for probably two or three days, we will endeavor to be silent together for a whole day or two days, whatever it may be.

But in addition to that, you may want to, those who want it can be silent all the time. There are some silent tables set aside in the restaurant. Or you can reduce your amount of verbal exchange to a minimum and not engage in a lot of chit-chat.

But that's up to you, I'm not saying you should. Or you can engage in normal chit-chat and still be present and observe the chit-chat coming out of your mouth. There it goes.

If you are one of those people who want to continue to chit-chat, that's fine. But something that will help you observe the chit-chatting entity, it helps to be, while you chit-chat or listen to somebody else chit-chatting, to be in your body, to feel the inner, the aliveness in your body while you sit there and chit-chat. That's not immediately easy because what tends to happen is the stream of chit-chatting draws all your attention in and the old stories come out.

And you can actually see how they pull you along, they pull your consciousness. Your consciousness is pulled into these words and the words go, one string of strings of words like coming out of you like some long... LAUGHTER And there's no end, it's like a magician.

And as that happens, can you be in the body or at least can you feel your hands, the aliveness in your hands while you talk? You are not really talking, it's the mind is talking. Can you feel the aliveness in your hands?

Or when you listen to the other person chit-chatting, can you feel the energy in your body? And while you listen, can you at least listen to the other person without engaging in preparatory chit-chat? LAUGHTER What you're going to say next?

Or some clever remark that's waiting on the tip of your tongue. So to be in the body, and that's useful also for those who decide to have more of a monastic retreat and refrain from speaking altogether because that doesn't help you, if that thing up here is continuously busy and perhaps even more busy than it would be if you were talking to

people normally because it gets so frustrated not being able to talk. And then it talks even more in the head.

LAUGHTER And so being in the body is important no matter whether you're having a social retreat or a monastic retreat. Being rooted here means that some of the attention goes away from... The mind hasn't got all that much attention any more.

The attention is in the body. And it's beautiful to rest, to have attention in here. While you do things, especially while you listen to others, or if you are having a silent retreat and you're sitting at a silent table, you can hear other people talking.

And can you be the silent listener while others are talking? Or is somebody else talking in you and saying, Look at these people. They're supposed to be on a spiritual retreat and they're talking, not me.

[Speaker 4] (3:40:13 - 3:40:36)

LAUGHTER Ego can use all kinds of disguises and forms.

[Speaker 1] (3:40:36 - 7:56:39)

And when you think you got rid of ego in one form, it appears in another. So it's essential to watch. Be there.

Watch. Be alert. So it's up to you then what kind of a retreat you want to have.

But we meet here. That's a given. Observe doubts that come into your mind, because mind is doubt.

If it's not doubt, it's some kind of obsession, or so-called conviction. It's probably worse than doubt. This absolute conviction that this is how it is.

And I've had it for 20 years and this is how it is. Or it goes, well, what if... But on the other hand, I shouldn't have come here, should I?

Yes, no... Oh, that reminds me of the presidential... These two seem to embody...

They say one was going from one to the other and the other has an absolute conviction. That's a given. Two forms of mind that the mind can take.

So doubt may come in that perhaps you shouldn't have come here. Often people tell me that on the second or third day they start thinking of leaving. The mind gets suddenly very active.

Nothing is happening here. And the same people often tell me, they haven't left, but they tell me towards the end of the retreat the mind comes in and absolutely says, I don't want to leave here. So you can observe that also.

That's a wonderful thing, to be there as the observer of your mind, what it does, what it says, its reactions. Because you're also observing the ego. Ego is no more than mind, mental, emotional forms that you have identified with, that carry a sense of self.

That's all. Being in the body, I recommend it tonight, when you go to bed. If you're traveling with a friend or a partner, once you lie down, at least then stop talking.

And going to sleep, lying flat on your back first, and enter the inner energy field of your body. And of course you will still listen, and you will listen much more acutely to the noises, the night insects, the beautiful sounds. And you will be able to listen to all that, because as you enter the body, the mind, the mental noise, will gradually calm down, or dissolve completely.

And only then can you truly listen. We'll be talking about that more. So you lie on your back, hands either on your legs or by your side, and you lie in the energy field of your body.

And so the compulsive thinking subsides, the thinking entity subsides, and there's simply spacious aliveness. And go to sleep from there. Don't go to sleep from mental noise.

You're lucky here that there's no television, so you can't watch the latest talk show, or whatever it is. There's no magazines, at least I haven't seen any. If you brought them, put them away.

Newspapers, put them away. Because these are addictive things to the mind, which is always searching for more, more stimulus, more of this to get its teeth into. And so you may find, not only tonight, but also in the next few days, certain symptoms of withdrawal symptoms.

Because the mind is addictive. The mind, everybody's mind is an addict. And so even if you're not addicted to drugs, it's still an addict.

And if you can't sing, even if you don't watch TV and read papers, ever, the mind is still addicted, and its main addiction is thinking. I've got to think. But there's nothing to think about.

You're in bed in this beautiful place. What is there to think about? What could you add to this moment by thinking about some other moment?

You can only obscure the moment by thinking about something else. So this is another aspect. We won't go into this this evening.

It's transcending having to think. And if you achieve nothing else in your incarnation here, your life is fulfilled. Consciousness has flowered.

No matter whether the world tells you that you are important or not, consciousness has

flowered. And if you wake up in the middle of the night, and soon after you wake up, usually the mind starts saying something. It will be about past or future or complaining or whatever.

And then simply go back into the body. Use it. Don't say, Oh, I should be asleep.

No, you're not asleep. Or say, I can't sleep. I'm going to be tired.

I'm going to fall asleep tomorrow in the session. We don't know what you're going to fall asleep. You're not asleep.

No, that's all you know. And that is what you are internally aligned with. I'm not asleep.

Okay. And then you go into the body. And it's beautiful not being asleep in the body.

You're in the body then. And then not being asleep is not a problem. In fact, it's very enjoyable.

And say, Oh, this is good. Little fragments of thoughts may come in. This is good.

It feels good. Alive. And then you listen.

Subtle noises. Beautiful. And you feel an intense aliveness within.

And then perhaps at some point, you will go back to sleep. And in the morning, fortunately there's no radio here to switch on. Can't listen to the news.

Don't know what's going on. It's always the same anyway. I listen to it too.

But I know it's always the same. Just not in the morning though. The first, keep that freshness.

As you wake up, that freshness. Keep it fresh. And instead of going immediately into thinking, go back into the body before you get up.

Just five or ten minutes. And then you get up. That's a good start.

It was a good end to the day. And it's a good start to the next day. So that you don't go into sleep from thought.

And you do not go from sleep immediately into thought. You have a space. And then remember the next, when you interact with people, be in the body as much as you can while you interact.

So that you feel. And if you can't be in the body, feel just the hands. Be there in here while you listen.

If you can't feel the whole body. So that is important. No matter whether you are quiet or

whether you talk on the retreat.

I will address this again when we have our silent days. Something else that you may want to do. There's one sense that's a little bit neglected.

The primary senses for human beings are visual and auditory. Smelling. At different times of the day, the air smells different here.

And so you can take, also as you get up, you put your head out of the window or the door. Or you walk out of here. Or you walk out of the restaurant.

Always take, smell the air and see the fragrance. Smell that. Always subtly different.

But there's more here than the smell. Notice that in the moment of smelling the air, there's no thought. Because if you were thinking, you couldn't smell it.

In the moment of smelling the air, there's no thought and there's an intense sense of aliveness. Then afterwards, after that smell, perhaps thought comes in. And then you notice that.

But a great thing is if you can notice, and that perhaps you've been doing for years, perhaps if you're not totally identified with the mental noise, you have occasionally, when you're out in nature, you've taken a deep breath and said, this is good. But you didn't say this is good while you were smelling, it came afterwards. While you are conscious of that, there's no thought.

And there's more to it than that, but I'll leave it at that right now. So use that. Senses will become very important this week as we practice presence.

Senses will become sharpened as more awareness flows into all the senses. We'll address that tomorrow. But we already have enough for tonight and the night and tomorrow morning.

Remember, the slightest upset, for whatever reason, I'm never upset for the reason I think, I lost the present moment. I lost the internal alignment with the present moment. And at that moment of realization, the possibility of being aligned with the present moment is there.

It is your decision or your choice. Do I want to continue being out of alignment and feel upset? And then perhaps the ego says, oh yeah, I'd love to feel even more upset.

Now you see, that's a funny question because when you make it conscious, you can see that it's insane. And so the pattern will collapse when you make it conscious and if you ask yourself, is this what I want? Do I want to continue to be upset about this or am I enjoying feeling upset about this?

Or is it possible now that I've realized I'm out of alignment, I can choose to say yes to what is and be in alignment with what is. It's your choice then. Choice comes in at that moment.

The universe chooses through you to be conscious. And if your mind said, oh, I'd love to carry on being upset, you would start laughing. It doesn't work anymore because you've made it conscious.

No matter how hard you try, you can't be upset anymore. That's no fun anymore, says the ego. Life just isn't fun anymore.

Notice your left leg is moving. That's an emotion. Be aware of it.

I'm not saying stop it. Just watch it. And you're not the only one.

I always see people whose leg or arm moves slightly. It is an emotion in the body. All you need to do is be conscious of it and suddenly it will stop.

It's something that is... You're not fully in here yet. There's something.

Be conscious. Watch it. And then it stops by itself.

If your attention is in here, it stops. If your attention is in here, the body goes... Get in here.

Be in here. Your consciousness has to go in here. And then the body becomes a portal.

And eventually you transcend body, but first you go in here. It's essential to leave that, to get out of that while you're here. Not to become unconscious, but to transcend that, the thinker.

And then there's not only the thinker, there's the emotional field that accompanies the thinker, that's been there for years. There's the pain body that's been there, not just your pain body, humanity's pain body that's been there for years. So there's the thinker in alliance with the pain body.

They together form the ego. The emotional field, old emotion and that. And that feeds that, and the emotion feeds the thinker, and the thinker feeds the emotion.

Consciousness. In consciousness. And watch.

If there's a movement in here, simply watch that. Internally, not externally. Internally.

Feel it. Now one more thing. There is something in perhaps everyone, and that is the emotional, mental emotional entity that is simply a form that consciousness has taken that you confuse with who you are.

And that egoic entity does not want to be here. It may occasionally arise as you sit here and manifest either as intense thought movement in the head, you're not listening to a word anymore that's being said here, intense thought movement, whatever it is, I don't know what about, could be anything, past, future, dreamland, anything. Fantasy, or your problems, or your life, or what somebody did to you, or what you're going to do to them, or what you should have said and didn't say.

Whatever. As you sit here, there can be a reaction. It can be very intense in the head, and or in the body as an emotion, so much so that you just can't stand it being here anymore.

And then sometimes I can see people, they start looking around when it happens, and some look for the door. And again, just when it happens, you can watch that. I may, without offending, wanting to offend you, if I occasionally see somebody who is engaged in it, I might point it out.

So there's nothing personal about thoughts or emotions. Oh, well, that takes a lot of steam out of my story. And if you cannot stand it here, if the impulse comes to leave, to go home, I'll just recommend one thing.

Do not immediately obey the impulse, but watch the impulse to go, wanting to go home. Allow it to be there. Watch it.

You may watch it, and it may subside, and an hour later you may find you love it. Or it may well be that the impulse comes continuously, or doesn't go away, and then you may find yourself, you have no choice, you have to, you do, you cannot stop yourself, you have to go, then if you have to go, it is not wrong to leave here. You are not wrong if you leave here.

It just means consciousness will arise in some other way, in you or through you, somewhere else, in another situation, perhaps while you're traveling home, or when you arrive home, or 50 years later when you're near deathbed. We don't know. It is not wrong.

Although when you, those who do leave, the egoic mind will attempt to make everybody else wrong. That's normal. And that's not personal either.

And when it happens, you can watch that in yourself. All these people, I'm not going to stay here. Okay, they're all wrong, and I'm right.

Yes, that's how it is. It's okay. Spiritual alarm clock, but much nicer than any alarm clock.

Thank you. Quite a few people apparently arrived after our meeting last night. And for those who did, let me summarize what we said last night.

Your only job here is to be present. That's it. To be present is a reversal of the normal way in which people live.

Normal means unconscious. Normal means insane, dysfunctional, and so on, of course. So we don't want to be normal.

The result of normal, you see, when you watch the news or television, that's normal. The arising of presence goes beyond the personal realm. It seems to happen to a person.

But at the same time, it's only happening because the personal dimension is becoming relatively unimportant. It's still there, remains there, but it becomes far less significant than it has been before. Your whole personal sense of me, of selfhood, of story, my story, any kind of my mind, my history, my story, my future, my purpose, my...

The normal way is that the present moment is on the periphery of your consciousness because you've got better things to be worried about. So the attention is normally mainly on past or future. Probably more future for most people than past, except very old people when it shifts to past.

So they talk about the past all the time because they haven't got much future left to think about. Not knowing that old age is an incredible opportunity for entering the timeless dimension that is presence when you haven't got much future left. So this is our training ground for living in a different state of consciousness where your primary attention is always on the present moment.

Peripherally you are still aware, of course, of your life situation, which has a past and probably a future, unless something happens. You never know. Nobody knows.

So that your consciousness is not completely absorbed any longer by your life situation. Every life situation is to some extent problematic. But there's nothing problematic about the present moment.

That's the amazing thing. And every life situation is to a greater or lesser extent complicated. But there's nothing complicated ever about the present moment.

So instead of deriving your sense of self from your life situation, derive your sense of self from the present moment. The depth of the present moment, which is the depth of who you are, which is not what happens, but it's underneath what happens. But only when you are aligned with what happens can you get to that which lies deeper than what happens, which is the form that life takes at this moment.

You can never get to the formless dimension as long as you reject the form internally. In another teaching, this has been expressed by somebody, I don't know who, I can't remember. Somebody asked, how can I become free of the world?

And that teacher said, when you love the world and everything in it, and to be aligned with the present moment is really no more than that. It's not to accept what is, this is the form, and that openness towards the form that arises is really love, this allowing. And that's our practice here.

Probably only little things will arise on a retreat, a relatively protected setting, although occasionally it happens that some people go through enormous drama even on a retreat. The shift in consciousness happens when the present moment becomes primary, that's all. You realize how important, how much incredibly more important this is compared to your life situation.

And to live rightly, or to get your life right, is totally pointless, even to make plans. There's nothing wrong with making plans, but it's like constructing a building, there's nothing wrong. If you make plans without, you think, OK, I have to get my life right and in order, and you're making plans, and it's all mapped out, that's where I want to get, and this is how I'm going to get there.

And if you forget what is primary, the present moment, it's like building a big building without the foundation or crumbling foundation, because your relationship with the present moment isn't right. You're hoping that when you achieve all the things that you have planned, then your relationship with life will suddenly fall into place, and you will totally fit into life, and life will be working for you. But if you carry inside the mind structure of non-alignment with the present moment, then no matter what you achieve, that which you want to achieve through whatever you achieve, you're never going to get.

So we're not saying don't make plans, but this is about the very foundation. To get your life right is getting this moment right. Your relationship to this moment, and that's not the ultimate truth, because if you go even deeper, you realize you, who you are in your essence, and what we call the present moment beyond the form that this moment takes, is there one.

But let's, just for a moment, use that approach and talk about your relationship to the present moment. No, this is not the ultimate truth, but it's an approximation towards the truth. If your relationship to the present moment is not right, nothing can ever be right in the future, because when the future comes, it's the present moment.

And your habit, your mental, emotional habit, is to have a dysfunctional relationship with it when it comes. And so when it comes, it's never quite right, and it's never enough. There's always something missing.

For a little while, there's an elation when some new form arises that satisfies you for a moment, takes away the needing and wanting, and you get a little bit of glimpse of the fullness of being. Not because the ten million dollars suddenly arrived in your bank

account, but because for a moment, the ten million dollars removed the wanting, the next thing. For a moment, the ten million dollars removed the mental, emotional, wanting and grasping to where's the next thing, the more that I need to fulfill myself.

For a moment, the ten million arrives, and the wanting seems to be satisfied. For a moment, it subsides. And because of that, the joy that you feel is not because of the ten million dollars that arrived in your bank account, but because for one moment, the incessant wanting, future, subsided.

And then the joy of being came through. And you confuse that and believe it's caused by the ten million dollars. And that can happen with big things or little things.

They give you suddenly enormous satisfaction, but what you really feel is that for a moment, the wanting has died down. And when that mind structure, which is the future, looking to the future, then being, the aliveness, the essence of who you are, the joy of being comes through. But never for long.

And then it reasserts itself. And there's renewed wanting. And then you get the sense that there's something missing, even with the ten million dollars in your bank account.

And the same dysfunctional relationship with the present moment arises again. Except that before, you were living in a trailer, and you had a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. And when the ten million dollars arrive, you live in a mansion, and there you have a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment.

Ultimately it doesn't make much difference where you are unhappy. You might say, I'd rather be unhappy in luxury than in poverty, but it really makes little difference. Recognizing what is primary and getting, observing your relationship with the present moment.

And this is a training ground while we are here. We bring attention to that, what, and we ask, and again, that's a little pointer. We had one last night from the Course in Miracles.

I'm never upset for the reason I think. That's to point it out why you're upset, because you're not in touch with the life that you are, the depths of your being. And anything out there can upset you, but it's not that, it's that.

You're not in touch with the present moment. Another pointer now, ask yourself as often as possible, what is my relationship with this moment, the present moment? And observe the witness, your relationship with the present moment.

And you may observe that it is not a friendly one. And that's enough to know that, because that's an unconscious habit. To have an unfriendly relationship with the present moment is an unconscious habit.

The moment you make an unconscious habit conscious, it begins to dissolve. So the simple recognition that my relationship with this moment is unfriendly or even hostile, or I'm running away from it. I want to be somewhere else.

I resist this. Interesting. Don't fall into the trap of self-condemnation.

Because if you condemn yourself for not being in a good relationship with the present moment, you have added a further dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. You see? I'm no good.

I can't do it. I've done it again. I can't.

You see? You see all the internal dialogue. Sometimes you talk to yourself as you.

You address yourself as you. That's what the mind does. You see?

You can't do it. There's no point. You're just not good enough.

Or you say, that teaching doesn't work. I have to try some other teaching. It obviously isn't working for me.

And that's just a thought. Don't believe any thought that comes into your head. Just watch.

And this is particularly important on this retreat. Thoughts that come into your head are just thoughts. No more.

Don't give them an importance that they do not have. You can allow them. It's there.

But don't completely believe in every thought that comes into your head. So, examining your relationship with the present moment as often as possible. And that's not an analysis.

You don't need to analyze. You simply watch. Mental and emotional.

Am I judging this moment mentally? Am I calling it not good enough? Am I running away from it?

Am I projecting myself elsewhere? Am I resisting it emotionally? And that's enough to see it.

The moment you see it, the unconscious pattern begins to dissolve. But in addition, that happens by itself. But in addition, you can actually choose to be fully present.

The moment you realize you're not present, you don't have a friendly relationship with the present moment. At that moment, you can also choose to be present. You can choose or you can choose as we said last night, you can also choose that you want to

continue to have an unfriendly relationship with the present moment.

I'd like to continue to be unhappy. That's a choice too. But it's unlikely that you would, if it makes conscious, that's an unconscious egoic choice.

Yes. The choice to be unhappy, humans make that all the time. But they're not conscious of it.

But consciously, it would even be absurd if you even said to yourself, I love that, this unhappiness. I really enjoy this. The moment you said that, you're making it conscious and you would start laughing.

It just doesn't work. A dysfunctional pattern, when you make it conscious, can't work anymore. It doesn't work anyway because it's dysfunctional.

I think. So we are to be able to observe your relationship with the present moment of course requires some presence. Very unconscious people simply react unconsciously and they don't have that choice.

They cannot observe their relationship with the present moment. And this is not something that you can bring about. Precondition for being able to observe your relationship with the present moment is that there is enough presence in you from where you can observe your relationship with the present moment.

And this is not something that you can make happen. This is the grace. By grace, there is enough presence in you so that you can be conscious of your relationship with the present moment and of the present moment itself.

You can be conscious of the thoughts you have. You can be conscious of the emotions that go through you. Very unconscious people, they are their thoughts.

They are their emotions. They're completely in the grip of their thoughts and emotions. There's nothing you can do to tell them, observe your thoughts and emotions or be conscious of your relationship with the present moment.

It's pointless. They don't even know what you're talking about. So that is not something that is up to you to choose.

By grace, presence is arising through this form. And because presence is arising through this form, you are able to say, I choose to be present. And that is good.

Now you can say, I choose to be present, because there is enough presence in you to do that. So really, what speaks in you, what chooses, is presence itself. Presence is arising and it looks as if a person were choosing to be present.

And this is because you are going beyond the personal realm, beyond that you transcend

the limitations of being no more than a little person with a little past and a little future. And that's why we are here, to see that it is possible to live much more beautifully, much more effectively and joyously in that way. So the primary, your primary attention, while we are here, this is a protected setting, it's a training ground, it's a greenhouse, or hothouse for consciousness.

But it's not as much as a hothouse as some retreats. Some retreats are so structured and you have to meditate ten hours a day, and you don't speak at all, although we will have periods of not speaking, that they become a real hothouse, and the consciousness can develop very quickly in extremely structured and protected setting, and then you become very present after ten days a week, and everybody goes, it's beautiful. And then the retreat comes to an end.

And then they go out, and the first they go back into the traffic, they go back into the city, they go back into their normal life, and they feel... And the hothouse plant isn't used to normal conditions. The moment you take the hothouse plant out of the hothouse, and it stays for two or three days, and then...

So here we have a in some way normal life, but something else arising, we continue to interact to some extent, but not as much as in so-called ordinary life. So we bring consciousness into the ordinary, into relating. Now this is very important, the choice to be present.

You are able to make that choice. And ultimately, but this doesn't matter, it's a philosophical question, it is not you as the person who chooses presence, because you as the person would never choose presence. Because the person is the old conditioning, is the ego.

You as the person don't want to be present. So when you choose presence, it is not the person that chooses, it is the deeper dimension of that which is beyond the conditioned that chooses to be present. And occasionally, you may find the obstruction of the person coming back in.

It doesn't say, I don't want to be present, it says something else to distract you, to pretend that something else is more important than being present. The person is also the conditioned thought patterns is part of the person. All the conditioned thought patterns in the head are part of the person, the me.

And identification, the thought patterns are clever. They will come up with some thought that draws you out of presence and that it doesn't say this is more important than presence, it implies that this is more important than presence, and I need to think about this, this thought is, and off you go. So you may observe that also, the person reasserting itself, which is the old pattern, the old thought, and you disappear.

You disappear into the conditioned. Consciousness goes back to sleep. Consciousness identifies with form, thought forms, emotional forms.

Consciousness identifies with forms and continues to dream the dream of form, which is the dream that you are no more than a person. And then everything that is in form in your life has an enormous importance in that dream because you know nothing beyond the dream. So everything that happens is so terribly important.

That's why you get upset so much. It's true. And things happen continuously in the dream to upset you more.

Consciousness dreaming the dream of form, one of the ways in which that manifests is as a person. And if consciousness were not ready to awaken, nobody would be awakening. It is only because consciousness is ready to awaken out of that dream that we are sitting here.

And for many people it is not until the dream becomes very unpleasant that they begin to awaken. It's only when the dream gets just can't stand anymore and then that suffering, that pain wakes you up and suddenly you become present. Some people are forced into presence.

Many of you were forced into presence because you couldn't stand the dream anymore. The dream of past and future. The dream of me and my story.

And that's why you're here. So choosing, you choose to be present and you may have to choose that many times. Particularly when you notice the dysfunctional relationship with the present moment.

And choose. Now what happens the moment you say I choose presence? That's just a thought.

That's not yet presence. It's a pointer. I choose presence is not presence.

Otherwise and that's the traditionally the mistake of religion is to confuse the pointer with that which it points to. And so if that ever happens you'll know that this has happened when we start having prayers about presence. We choose presence.

Or even worse we believe in presence. And if you don't then you're wrong. That's or worse.

Now what happens I choose presence to be present. You enter the present moment. What happens as you enter the present moment?

When you observe another person going through the shift from dreamland which is being identified with thinking and emotions and their problems and their future and suddenly something wakes them up into presence and you observe you can see both the

difference in their face and in their eyes and also the energy emanation that changes and it goes like this or or or into suddenly you wake up out of the dream of thought and for some people it happens that the first thing they notice when they become present is their surroundings as if they had just arrived.

And then they may notice certain noises that were there. One man reported I read about it became present at home for the first time he had lived there for several years and he heard distant but clearly audible church bells it was somewhere in Europe he had never heard the church bells before because he was too much his consciousness was too much absorbed by thought. For the first time in years he heard church bells ringing and was amazed and you may see colors, you may see light you become aware of the space in the room and the next thing often that happens is you sense more the energy field, the entire energy field in the body that is Piccato, because it's presence within and presence without and you feel there's an aliveness in the body whereas before you didn't, the body wasn't really, even if you did physical exercises still you were not in the body, you were still even while you're on the treadmill in the gym you're either thinking about your problems or you're watching a TV screen, that's what people do it's quite draining because the attention goes out there so even people who say they're looking after their bodies are not necessarily in the body it can be still in here and so most people live in the upper compartment or in the loft or the attic and there's the entire building inhabited by weird by weird people all kinds of emotions live in there and go and anybody can come in because you're not there they all know that you're only up there and then the emotions they make a lot of noise and then they take over the thinker and the thinker doesn't know what's happening so presence means first usually ah you become present without and within there is an alertness that is suddenly there and thought is not important is no longer primary when presence arises another word for presence of course is stillness because whenever you are present the movement of thought subsides occasional thoughts can still come in but there are suddenly there is space there is suddenly the space of no thought but but I'm reluctant to call that a relaxed state in a way it is a relaxed state but it is not to be confused with what is normally called relaxation in the mind identified unconscious state it has relaxation when you go you're hanging out and that's good at least for a while you are free of the torture of the mind and then there is the high energy state which in the egoic state is stress some kind of let's get it, let's get something done ok we've got so much to do, come on let's get on with it that's the high energy state and then occasionally they lapse into the so called relaxed state, perhaps only after a few drinks or then they just let's hang out or wedge out is the expression in front of the TV wedging out in front of the TV and with the TV the nice thing is that you don't have to think your own thoughts anymore, the thoughts and that's it's a small liberation from yourself but you're unfortunately you link into all the stuff that you see and you think their thoughts whatever thoughts they want you to think you switch on into that you link into that and then you don't have your own problems you just live their problems but at least it frees you from your own for a little while but

that's not a liberation really it's just a shift from one mind form to another mind form but for some people they relax a little bit then in front of it and if you have a can of beer it's even better laughter and then the next morning you go back into the high energy state and with the briefcase or whatever it is phone calls is there something that is neither this nor that yes and that's the state of presence I'm reluctant to call it relaxed because of what I've just described what is normally called relaxed is losing consciousness drifting towards sleep and what is usually called high energy in the mind state is quite a stressful state and it's not the body doesn't like it but the ego says I've got to be responsible I've got to be stressed to be responsible if I'm not worried I'm not responsible about my life and as the man called the boss calls the employee into the office into his office and says I've told this joke before looks at him grimly and says the boss says to the employee you are the only person in this company not suffering from a stress related disease how come laughter so that there is another way to live that is neither the state where you hang out all the time nor the state of so called high energy that is stressful and ultimately harmful to the body and harmful to everybody around you because it is a state of dysfunction ultimately you can go into some companies and everybody is unhappy they are all running around fighting against each other as much as they are fighting against the competition uselessly their energy is being uselessly burned up in fighting and fighting against this and against that their positions and their little cliques with their positions totally absurd and they are all anxious, intense insane presence is very different it is a state of high energy but there is no stress in it and there is not no sleepiness in it whatsoever in fact it is extremely alert and that's the then you become very effective not that you have you are not forced into activity when there is actually nothing useful to do you are quite happy with not doing without losing the high energy of presence you can just sit and be without falling into the vegetative state you could sit for an hour or two and it is beautiful and more and more you would enjoy the simple state of being present the joy of being of being present with yourself of feeling your own presence your own is the way of putting it, it is not yours it is presence and when activity is required presence can flow into doing and you give all those people many people who are those people who are very successful in whatever field of endeavor those who are very successful and not unhappy have touched presence in what they do now there are others who in the eyes of the world are successful but really they are very unhappy at the same time, there is no point in that no matter how much money you make what's the point in making money making your bodies ill everybody else unhappy including yourself and then you die so you can actually it is a very different energy energetically than presence is not the ego knows nothing of that that it is possible to be to put enormous energy into something that you do without stress if that is what is needed presence is clear energy and it can flow into action some sports people know that they enter the so called zone as they say and when they are in the zone then right action happens and it is joyful this is why people watch they watch because it is beautiful to watch somebody performing an action in the state of presence because a little bit of that transmits itself it is also joyful to be with somebody who is not active in the state of

presence to some extent that happens here it is joyful to sit here because also a kind of transmission happens but here it is not through action but through simple being non-action something that transmits itself and awakens that dimension within you not that it comes through this form into you as if you didn't have it yet no it is here and something in you recognizes it that is why it is nice to be here and the moment it is no longer nice to be here you have gone back into your mind and as long as it feels good to be here you are present when it doesn't feel good to be here anymore you are absent again, you are back in so we could say it is as present as relaxed alertness if you look at two breeds of dogs you could say let's say there is the german shepherd dog and quite many german shepherds they are excellent guard dogs because they are a little bit nervous not all but they are bred to be nervous, to be alert and they go, they look when a visitor comes, they are a bit suspicious and they look at you and then there is the saint bernard dog now if you could cross breed these two you would get a present dog now maybe I have given somebody an idea for a new business and of course my favorite example of that with human beings which some of you already know you have the buddha and then you cross the buddha with the character played in most films by clint eastwood cross the two and you have presents now it is not only that the moment you choose presents you become conscious of sense perceptions of your surroundings it is also sense perceptions themselves when you pay attention to sense perceptions can help you to enter the state of presence to become very conscious of sense perceptions not to lose yourself in sense perceptions now we will see the difference in a second to become very conscious of sense perceptions and in this setting here highly recommended and sense perceptions here are mostly beautiful ones and that is good it is nature mostly what you see here is nature and humans which is also nature let's talk about nature for a moment to become conscious of sense perceptions is to look or listen or smell I mentioned last night to smell the air which changes it is a different smell in the morning from the way it smells after it has rained if it does in the evening it is alive and notice that at the moment of smelling the air there is no thinking because you cannot smell the air and think while you smell the air there is no thought perhaps afterwards the thought interprets the smell or maybe some poem comes into your mind about the air or some haiku or whatever that's thought and sometimes thought that comes after presence is more likely to be original and inspired when it comes and even a brief stretch of presence is enough sometimes to give rise to an inspired original thought not a thought that is of the ego that makes you unhappy and creates more stress and more problem no, an inspiring original alive thought may come not that it has to come you are quite happy without it and then you take another breath and smell again and there is no thought and then you look and in the perception you look at a flower, a tree or just one leaf moving in the wind not necessarily look at what is spectacular there is so much here that is spectacular so much beauty all the potted plants that in colder climates we have at home and they are little and here they are all out there and huge and it's there is a lot that is spectacular and that's good to see too but not just look at the spectacular huge tropical flowers and so on but also look at relatively insignificant things one leaf and there is a slight breeze and

the leaf is moving in the breeze it's quivering and stay with that for whatever a minute, two minutes this is just one example of many ways in which you can observe the little the seemingly insignificant and as you observe there is the perception against the background of stillness there is no labeling mentally of what you are observing because then you would lose the sense perception you would go into thought so you can play with that yourself see if you can be present with the sense perception without going into thought and if you go into thought observe the thought and then let it go and go back to the sense perception and so there is more than that there is not just at the moment we are talking about visual sense perception there is not just the sense perception you are not just conscious of the leaf moving quivering slightly and poets have done that and great artists, they are able to watch in presence and then out of that a poem may come and they talk about some great beauty that came out of the state of presence and if it's a great poem can put you back into the state out of which it came in the author that's why it's called great nothing is called great and humans can recognize it that means they are not as insane as they seem to be something in humans recognizes the greatness of great art or great poetry or great literature what is it that makes one work great and the other one is mere fiction or one painting is great and the other one is mere colors put together it is the state out of which it came was it put together by the mind trying to think of something clever a lot of modern artists like that let's try and think of something clever and we make some abstract statement through that it's fine, but it doesn't touch people in here it can stimulate the mind that's okay on that level it doesn't touch you here, if it touches you here it awakens presence you can go directly to that which inspired many artists and poets which is nature go directly to it and watch the quivering leaf and be still as you watch otherwise you have to be, otherwise you can't watch it be with it and notice there's the form whatever it is the leaf moving in the wind is there anything else there apart from the form now you could lose yourself in that form you could just go into and then you fall off the chair or you can be there and see that, but also be conscious of that which makes the perception possible we could say of yourself not yourself as the person with the history but of yourself as the consciousness the attention, the stillness that makes the perception possible and that is not something that you can this is formless you can't touch it, you can't see it, you can't say oh there it is, because that which says there it is, is it so you can never make it into an object of knowledge this is an object of perception but as you perceive there's more than the object of perception but the object of perception helps you to find that the world of form helps you to find the formless which is that in you which is beyond form so you watch and you're aware of the form, but you're also aware of the background stillness the alert background stillness that is, you could also call that the I, the I am which has nothing to do with a person it's the consciousness itself through which the perception happens or in which the perception happens which is the formless dimension of who you are the eternal, formless, timeless dimension who you are beyond the form beyond the physical form beyond the psychological form of me to be trapped in in form is the most dreadful fate to go through your whole lifetime and never know who you are or what you are

beyond form is dreadful it's like being in a prison for the whole of your life so how is it that something seemingly so simple as observing a flower observing a leaf moving in the wind, observing a blade of grass or a little patch of ground or whatever it is or a tree or even a distant landscape the wholeness of it it is amazing that that can be an entry point direct perception an entry point into who you are the formless and these are incredible things but just watch and be aware of the watcher not only what is being watched but also feel, sense, be the being the consciousness that makes that flower possible or watch the sky that changes probably this afternoon as it has done the past few days in the afternoon clouds start coming in and the light changes and you can watch that and you can watch the movement of the clouds and as you watch be aware of the presence without which there would be no cloud movements do you think there would be the movement of clouds coming in if you weren't watching it?

of course not there are no clouds it requires a consciousness to see otherwise there are only atoms there is the game, the play of atoms and molecules there are no clouds atoms and molecules playing and through you arises a whole world and so be conscious of that essence in you which is consciousness the I am presence that makes the whole thing all this possible and so sense perception is vital it is much closer to who you are than thought thought is much further removed so in most humans sense perceptions are only peripheral because there is so much thought in them that there isn't much time for listening or watching they hardly ever they just listen or watch enough not to have an accident or to bump into something and sometimes there is so much thinking that they do have an accident because they are not present enough and of course when you perform a dangerous activity then you have to be present when you are in something certain dangerous activities require absolute presence and one thought and you are gone the actor Christopher Reeve died recently I was in Chicago when it happened and I saw on television they showed an interview with him that was done just a few months before he died and as you know he as they rightly pointed out in the interview he became a superman after his accident before it was just a role but then he was confronted with the incredible limitation of form and it seems that he became quite peaceful but we are not we do not need to seek out danger to be present some people believe that that's what they need to do and so they get addicted almost to an activity because it is so liberating compared to their normal state it is so liberating you feel so much more alive when you are present that they need to go back and then climb another wall and another and another and perhaps one day a thought comes in just as they grasp for the next ledge on the rock and that's it so here we sense perceptions are also an opening into presence and that's an important practice while we are here sense perceptions as an opening into presence if done rightly so there's always two dimensions to a sense perception that which you are perceiving and that which is perceiving the form and the formless and then you go to auditory sense perceptions beautiful and again there's no calling it of good or bad it's all equal when you are practicing sense perception you allow whatever sense, whatever noise is there to be there so there's a bird song

many different birds the crickets whatever they are at night that's a beautiful chorus wonderful to just listen to that there is the leaves in the wind all different noises and that's, modern humans cannot listen to it anymore there's too much thinking and as you listen be aware of the noise and of the background the perception is the foreground the consciousness, the stillness the presence is the background and it is you it is the formless you and this is at this very moment you can be in that state you can listen to the voice you can also see the room, that's the visual but you can also sense there's an underlying stillness and that is yourself beyond form the I am presence has no form and when you are in touch with that you no longer mind when the form doesn't stay or when the form isn't the most pleasant of forms like occasionally a heavy truck comes up the road here and it goes brrrr and you can listen to that also and continue to feel the background where that arises unaffected by the form the more you are rooted in the background I'm saying whenever we use language we create a duality I say you are rooted in the background or I say you are conscious of the background that's not how it is but the moment we form a sentence we have a subject and an object and we have duality what really happens is you become conscious of yourself it is self-awareness it is self-realization it's not that you are conscious of consciousness because that's what it is consciousness is conscious of itself and it's you you cannot become an object to yourself you can't make yourself into an object self is eternal subject all these different beautiful sounds and you have the sound and the inner stillness there is one bird here somewhere that sounds like a cell phone maybe you will hear it I saw one man who was looking around for his cell phone that's the conditioning from out there so we have visual sense perception and so sometimes look at something small and at other times it may be good to practice visual sense perception looking at a totality of a landscape either looking out there or looking at a group of trees or grove or bushes take in a larger space practice with different ways different ways of looking from the tiniest to larger to the spaciousness of the sky maybe a little beetle crawling on your floor in your room and there are lots of little beetles and sometimes when they hear this and then you can watch that and again be conscious not lose yourself in it just watch and you may want to pick it up either on a piece of paper and put it outside but watch it first before you put it outside it crawls and if it notices your presence the beetle stops and sometimes the head goes in and then if it notices that you are getting closer you are touching it all its legs go in also it becomes a little almost a ball and it will stay like that for minutes it can wait longer than you can that's why it survived for millions of years simply because it can wait and there's a beauty there too and it's this life or consciousness appearing in that particular form and you appear as a form also appear for a little while not much longer than the beetle beetle is maybe a few weeks or months and you are a few years that's all you appear also as a form a physical and psychological form for a little while unique perhaps more unique than the beetle I don't know if every beetle is unique or whether you can't tell the difference at first sight you can't tell the difference one beetle looks very much like any other beetle but probably to the beetle the humans look the same too but we are probably safe to say that there are subtle differences no two forms are

ever totally the same we mentioned snowflakes last night or human beings you with your particular physical form you could recognize a close friend but all the billions of humans on the planet there's not one that looks the same you would always be able to pick out somebody that you know well or your father or your mother nobody is quite the same so there is a uniqueness to the form and yet it evaporates very quickly and it's gone, that uniqueness is gone and if that's all you know then it's a very sad thing and the universe doesn't really make sense why create something unique and then destroy it well because the universe is playing with form when you watch if you saw life forms being born and dying and speed it up on a film you would see that it is a play you would see plants and sometimes they have made films like that where you can see a plant coming out of the soil and you speed it up over several days you would see it in one minute and it goes and then it withers and it's gone and then if you speed it up even more you see hundreds and thousands of different plants and trees going and humans coming out of the womb and growing and running around here and there and then shrinking becoming wrinkled shrinking and gone and then but at the same time others are already on their way they are coming so it's a continuous something nothing form formless the two dimensions and finding that yes although you are unique not only your appearance but also your life story nobody has quite the same life story as you basically in their deeper structure they are all very similar if not the same the deep structure of a life story any life story in any life story for example something goes wrong that makes it interesting if nothing went wrong there would be no story look at any film or any novel the deep structure in every film or every novel I can't think of any exception but there may be one or two but to watch those you would have to be really present if nothing goes wrong it's not interesting it's the moment something goes wrong the story starts any novel or any film look at it, doesn't matter what you can always say at some point she leaves him he dies they lose something they become ill something starts going wrong and that's why it's interesting and that's the life of form that's how it works and if you had a holiday in which absolutely nothing goes wrong it's conceivable although unlikely but it's conceivable it would be you wouldn't remember nothing but if something went very wrong you would remember it for the rest of your life and you could talk about it that happened that's the life of form so there's the uniqueness of your story on the one hand it's unique nobody has quite the same life story as you and yet deep down it's not that unique and yet also yet it's destined to dissolve very quickly just like a cloud every cloud is unique in that particular form but as you look at it it's already dissolving and changing so we honor the uniqueness of the form we honor the form that we are, not in essence but as we appear our life circumstances and the physical form without becoming trapped in that so this is why we are here to touch the formless within ourselves to be it, to recognize it and what do we use? we use the form as an entry point we are not saying although I'm not condemning that it's another way in some spiritual traditions they say do not look at beauty do not look at anything avert your eyes don't be seduced by sense perception they say just look at the floor all this they might say, they do it in some buddhist traditions, and I love buddhism it's beautiful all this is illusion in

some way of course that's true it's all destined to dissolve very quickly, every form in that sense it is an illusion, it is a dream so don't look just don't get into sense perceptions just be conscious of consciousness that may work too it's another way of entering this perhaps is more accessible for humans that are alive now perhaps at least for those who are here beauty is hiding in every form and beauty is not the external appearance ultimately but the essence in each form, which is the same essence that you discover when you are conscious of the consciousness that you are, that is perceiving then you realize the same essence of consciousness is in that form taking temporary expression as that form and so it is the beauty lies in that the true essence of beauty is always beyond the form appearance, it's something that shines through the form and that is the same in humans true beauty in humans is not of the form, it shines through the form, you can sometimes see it even in people whose body is crippled you can sometimes see if they have surrendered you can see beauty shining through the form or people who are close to death that light shines through so sense perceptions as an entry point into yourself so not only do sense perceptions keep you present they are also an opening into the formless dimension which of course it is presence presence is formless unconditioned consciousness and then we have touch, a neglected sense perception relatively probably the first one in the evolution of the species probably the first sense perceptions was touch when little worms crawling and that was the beginning of a world arising that was a very little world at first so to occasionally pick something up and feel it fully it's beautiful and again you cannot feel it fully unless you're completely attentive to what it feels like and there's no need to label it just feel and who is it or what is it that feels who or what is it that makes the sense perception possible your presence consciousness itself who you are, the stillness in the background against which the sense perception happens and that if you can live like that in the two dimensions you are a master and you are a blessing on the planet because a human being who can live in the two dimensions not being seduced by form into believing that that's all there is and not yet disappearing into the formless and saying I'm not going to be bothered with anything anymore, I'm not going to wash my hands even anymore because it's all form, no be here as a bridge between the two dimensions the formless and the entire world here is lost in one in form we don't need to improve this is not a workshop where we try to improve the world of form and there's a place for that also that's good but what the world needs is for humans to find that hidden dimension the spiritual because that's what spiritual is spiritual is not a belief spiritual is the formless dimension in yourself and that's not something to think about it's something to experience at this moment sense perception background the I am presence it has no attributes it's not big or small or young or old it has no age or time to it and if you can go into the world and live and be in the two as a bridge then you affect the world of form, anybody who is rooted in eternity in essence will deal with and relate to the world of form in a different way and will affect the world of form so it's not just the two dimensions are not separate they hang together and anyone being in touch with that will change the world without needing to change it or wanting to change it he cannot or she or he or she cannot not change the world so

you become a blessing when you are in touch with that which ultimately means yourself and then relate to people and continuously sense the background in any interaction sense the background of yourself as space and then in any interaction there's the spacious background of consciousness and there's the form there's the words that come there's the sense perception there's what you're talking about and you're not losing yourself in what you're talking about words come but as the words are spoken there's still a consciousness of consciousness stillness in the background there must be a very important message out there maybe what he's saying is it's time to wake up humanity needs to wake up he's so excited, I think that's what he's saying follow the sound with your attention until only attention remains which is presence the sound is form that which is there before and after the sound and underneath the sound is formless and now as you listen to the sound be aware of that which is listening that which makes the listening possible the I am presence form and formless and the loudspeaker out there represents the world which says this is so important you must give attention to this this really matters, absolutely and that's your challenge not to lose yourself in that you really have to drink coca cola, you must vote for this person you have to allow it you can't fight that because they're all fighting that creates the whole thing you can only watch it and be there as the watcher and then it changes without you wanting it to change thank you thank you just sit in the stillness just for a little while until you feel the body is getting up with some kinds of music particularly this kind the sounds always point to the silence so the when you listen to this kind of music the silence what is not there is more important more powerful than what is there it's not music that emphasizes the form in the case of music the form is sound so this kind of music does not emphasize the form as a lot of music does especially western music that can be beautiful too forms can be beautiful too but this does not emphasize the form there is only a bare minimum of form and your attention is being drawn to the formless the silence in between the sounds and underneath when you listen to that you can listen instead of listening to the sounds of the flute or whatever it is listen to the silent spaces to which all the sounds point then the act of listening becomes a meditation and you enter presence because the moment you pay attention to silence there is stillness in you and stillness is consciousness formless unconditioned the essence of you so one could say that kind of music brings out if you listen rightly brings out you the essence of you traditionally that kind of music has been played by meditating monks and then later musicians took over and they became good technically but very often the essence wasn't quite there anymore because in a subtle way it only seems to work when the person who is playing is in that state so that for example the way in which the sound of the flute subsides dies very subtle it goes from being manifested into unmanifested and then it takes you with it into the stillness now this is one example but amazingly the same thing operates in any human encounter interaction or relationship we already pointed to it yesterday is only the form there in the encounter the form, the thought forms are they interacting or is presence present in the interaction between you and another human being that is a qualitative difference that's enormous sometimes you may hear an interesting talk announced a dialogue between

two theologians about something a very interesting topic the sacred in modern civilization or something like that and then you go and listen and you are disappointed because they're talking about it the sacred but it's all form but the sacred isn't actually present there they're only using words and concepts and yet the essence is not there there's no stillness and that's the case with a lot of even spiritual discourse sometimes people tell me they read an interesting book and then the author comes into town and gives a talk and they go there and then they're disappointed because the book was more interesting than the author the author didn't seem to embody what he or she talked about in the book and at other times they do it happens too but often people tell me that it wasn't the presence wasn't there and so that's the whole point of us being here is to access presence in ourselves access it deepen it live it that new dimension not new in terms of time because presence is timeless but new in the sense that new on the planet it's a relatively recent phenomenon maybe only started a few thousand years ago with isolated humans who accessed that dimension within themselves and then attempted to show it to others they immediately realized it is in everyone they immediately realized they are not special they realized I am not because presence manifested through this form it does not make this form special it does not make this person special in fact the opposite is the case it's because this form this person has lost the illusion of specialness that it could come through and sometimes people ask strange questions they ask, an interviewer asked me once how do you explain that it happened to you why did this shift happen to you can you explain don't you feel very lucky that it happened to you and of course there is only an error hiding in the question it's because the you recognized itself as insubstantial that it happened the you the me became transparent recognized it's nothingness it's really all it's non-specialness means nothingness specialness is always ego specialness means the form wants to emphasize itself in order to survive in order to have an identity of me one way or another through identifying with this or that and then at some point the recognition comes that that is an illusion so the awakening doesn't really happen to anybody it's when the no-bodiness is recognized then it's there it's simply an illusion dissolving and of course in some spiritual seekers they still feel the unconscious need to be special and the projection is that once I attain enlightenment awakening then I will be special and finally be myself and yet as long as that entity is there wanting to obtain something in the future the specialness that you are that has nothing to do with the ego specialness now I'm changing the terminology for a second you are very special but not more special than anybody else there is something absolutely precious at the core of your being maybe that's what the Tibetans refer to in the famous mantra om mani padme hum which speaks of the jewel in the lotus and that specialness is the very life the very consciousness that you are and it is if anything is divine if we use the term divine for anything it is that it is the formless essence of your being it is the indwelling God essence and really apart from that everything else is simply has a dream like quality dreamt by the divine a divine dream a dream of form so there can actually one can feel the true specialness that you can only sense when the pseudo specialness goes the pseudo specialness says I am more special than you or at

least I'm trying to be the pseudo specialness can take strangest forms it can hide in many new forms when you think you've left it behind even that belief can already be a new specialness when you finally give away your Rolls Royce and your mansion and get on your bike and then all the other big cars go past you and you feel quite superior in a subtle way more subtle than before but the ego when the ego operates and you can observe it in those rare instances when the ego still operates in you there's always a subtle comparison of me with others and there's always a comparison implies inferior or superior you regard yourself as either inferior or superior compared to others and the ego is constantly on the lookout to see where it fits in it wants to be superior but often that doesn't work then it considers itself to be inferior with this strange unfulfilled longing to be superior and both are equally strong egos so somebody who feels inferior does not have a weaker ego people think people with strong egos are people who feel bigger than anybody else people who feel less than anybody else have an equally strong ego and people who feel too timid to speak up or maybe they don't have a strong enough no, their ego is very strong they just don't want to be they fear what happens to their ego when they speak up in public they fear what others may think of them that the image that others have of them may not be what they want what they desire for themselves is the image that they want for themselves so when you observe it it's good to observe the ego in oneself because the ability to observe it in yourself means you're not totally in the grip of it anymore so it doesn't mean you have failed the moment you observe the ego in yourself operating you may have just thought something or said something and suddenly something takes ah, ego and where does that realization come from? not from the ego, it comes from presence the arising presence it's only from the witnessing presence that you can be aware of a conditioned ego pattern and whatever you discover the more ego you discover in yourself the more successful you are in awakening and one could even say that the moment you have recognized the ego in you as ego it's not ego anymore because it's only truly ego when you are totally identified with that pattern so for example when you are discussing something with someone there's a group after dinner discussing some spiritual topic and you, somebody puts forward their opinion and then you feel a strong emotion coming up because you clearly recognize that that opinion is wrong at least from your point of view but and so there's immediately an identification with your mental position which is ego a mental position is a thought form this is how it is an opinion, a thought form so identification with a mental position is there which means the self has gone into the thought has incarnated one more time and it's already done that hundreds of times during that day has incarnated, you have reincarnated one more time into another thought form so instead of having broken the cycle of reincarnation you've readily gone into another one and then you put forward your opposing point of view not in a detached and relaxed way but with inattention that wants to show that you truly know but that person does not know and it's possible that at that moment or a few seconds later you recognize what's happening I can't even say that you recognize what you are doing because you are not doing it it happens the ego has a life of its own it's a pattern, collective pattern you are not doing it

the ego happens and the ego only happens when you are asleep then it happens it's a collective conditioning nothing personal and then suddenly you see it oh or in the middle of an argument you see how strong the emotion is that goes with defending your point of view and sometimes even the voice goes up you raise your voice you become a very heated argument they call it and that's just a tiny the ego wants to be superior, it wants to show it's not enough to be superior you need to be seen to be superior and so there's the constant it's an uneasy existence as an ego because even a superior ego goes around fearing that it might be inferior in some way even if it thinks it's superior one could go on for hours and days and weeks talking about the ego and all that's really needed is to see it and then what's left is only a pattern that still has a certain momentum but is no longer renewing itself so ego is a mixture of mind patterns and emotions and so they form an entity an emotional, mental emotional entity one could say that shifts, it identifies sometimes it takes things on board and sometimes it gets rid of things that it just tries to doesn't want so what it identifies with can change but the core of it are certain basic identifications they vary from person to person but basically they only vary slightly it's identification so it's basically the same so you could you can identify with sometimes one can observe the ego can identify one moment it competes with a person and the next moment it identifies with that person, I knew a mother who whenever the mother was talking to other people about her daughter who married a rich husband she would incorporate her daughter into her self image and as soon after she met somebody would mention that her wealthy daughter and the mansion and so on and the yacht so you couldn't meet this woman for five minutes before she had mentioned her wealthy daughter so she incorporated that into her self image but when she actually visited her daughter she competed she resented that her daughter had married this rich husband but she hadn't and so there was a competition with her daughter and a lot of hostility so when she was with her daughter the ego was competing against the daughter when she was away from her daughter the ego incorporated her daughter and it's always identification with something that you are not but you're hoping that by adding it to who you think you are that you can grow in your sense of self and it works in the sense that you can grow in your sense of self but only in your illusory sense of self and so the ego traditionally there are only two ways for the ego to be transcended and that is it gets knocked out of you by life through the suffering or through the coming into contact with the spiritual teaching and usually the two go together but sometimes suffering is enough for some people and they don't need a teacher anymore life doesn't leave you any identifications it takes them away from you and then you're left with nothing you don't know who you are anymore and there you sit, everything has crumbled around you and maybe you don't even have much longer to live it's possible too, even future has been taken away and there you sit not knowing who you are anymore because all identifications have been removed and now this is no guarantee that now the ego is transcended because you could even there the ego could still form a new image of itself as someone who has been dreadfully wronged by life no person has had a worse fate than me and it's there you have another ego life has taken away all

identifications and you have escaped you have suddenly immediately invented a new story for yourself which says you're the greatest victim of all of life and from then on you can have resentment against everything and everybody look at all these people, I hate them and God what you did to me, I'll never forget that and yet at other times it can happen that a new story is not invented the ego has come to an end and those people suddenly wake up and say where does that peace come from I feel so peaceful that's often the first question and they smile and they don't know why they smile and then somebody comes and say why are you smiling and say I don't know there are some humans coming into this world now some still have a heavy they inherit as I did as many of you did they inherit all the heavy ego structures that have built up over thousands and thousands of years and then it's painful you create suffering for yourself believing that life does it to you and then there's so much suffering that finally it dissolves you can't stand it anymore you can't live with myself anymore and you suddenly realize it's all self created but there are some humans coming into this world now who have relatively little ego here and there so they may not have to go what we had to go through and that's good some may be born into relatively conscious parents background environment some may come to talks at an early age and some don't need that at all and yet they are still in conflict with the surrounding culture because they are at school somewhere they are living this mad world and they may not necessarily be able to adjust to this world but they'll survive and the world won't they are part of what is stronger than the mad world that is arising now so ego one way of transcending ego is simply to recognize it in yourself that's already a transcendence the other is to be very conscious of the thoughts that go through your head because ego is thought, identification with thought plus the emotions that accompany those thoughts and that is our practice here it's not only recognizing ego when it appears it's also to be very much conscious of the root of ego and the root of ego is thought and identification with thought with thinking and ultimately the ego cannot go away it can perhaps disappear for brief moments but it cannot dissolve unless you go beyond compulsive thinking and that is our task so that we can more and more live in the state of no thought we've already suggested ways of entering the state of no thought which is called presence we can call presence we can call awareness we can call stillness, alert stillness not asleep stillness asleep stillness means you're falling below thought but to transcend thought is to rise above thought and then you realize whenever you think there is a diminished degree of alertness compared to the state of no thought where you have risen above thought when you look at a flower when you take one conscious step when you perform one conscious action conscious meaning you're totally there without the interference of mental labels without making something into a means to an end that's conscious that's completely present there you are awake and then thought comes in and you can sense the diminished degree of wakefulness as the moment thought identification with thought comes in and you can actually feel in yourself or observe in somebody else how they go from clarity to a dreamlike state which often means there's a problem that you need to solve there's a memory there's a future situation that you're thinking about you're moving into away

from what is so we've suggested ways of sustaining without making an effort it's no effort you can't make an effort to be present a way of sustaining presence for more than a moment by conscious looking by conscious self sense perception by conscious action by conscious listening by consciously being in the body these are all ways of exiting the noise machine in the head and there's another one that will work for some of you but not for all and we cannot call it method it is the most direct way it's not a method because method implies there's a little bit of distance the most direct way is simply and some people will tell you you can't do that of course they tell you that because they couldn't do it one way simply to stop thinking because you decide that you want to stop thinking now that's an interesting one that requires a considerable degree of alertness sustained alertness if you can sustain alertness this is what people try to do when they practice meditation techniques but here I'm saying examine the possibility of entering that state without any technique and without any method simply by allowing yourself to be present and alert and it is you need effort is not involved and yet you need the attitude of a warrior you need the I occasionally use the expression the sword of presence and with that sword you cut through time because time is and thought go together if you remove time thought collapses also if you remove thought there's no more time there's only this moment because all past and all future are thought forms if anybody else knows a greater truth you can tell me now and can tell me that you have actually touched the future or experienced it some might tell me yes but I foresaw the future well when did you foresee it? in the now surely so you both if you have the ability to foresee the future when does that happen you foresee it at this moment and when it comes it's also this moment it's not philosophy it's too simple to be philosophy it is self evident so anything that's self evident cannot become philosophy no so I'm not saying that it is not possible to predict what we call the future but it's still always now that's all we need to know and recognize it's still always now so past and future only exist as thoughts in your head because in your experience actual experience direct experience all you have is the present moment ever that's all so past and future are abstractions mental abstractions the moment you stop thinking there's no past and future there is the enormous aliveness and vitality and intelligence of the present moment the power of life itself is there and the present moment before when you were absorbed in past and future and thinking the present moment seemed totally insignificant because you were concerned with the vastness of past and the vastness of future and me in the middle of all that and what looked like the smallest thing the present moment is really it's like splitting the atom present moment recognition means you discover that in the tiniest thing is concealed the most enormous amount of energy the atom is the present moment and it suddenly splits and reveals it is the very core of all energy the very heart of all life energy emanates from now the present moment and before it seemed so insignificant the tiniest thing so here we are splitting the atom but it's not going to be made into a weapon it's simply a because it cannot be a weapon weapon means always separation me against you so here we are recognizing thought and time go together we abolish time we abolish thought it doesn't matter where you start if you say there is only this moment

automatically thinking subsides and you enter presence or if you say there is nothing to think about I'll just be still that's it and alert that's it no past, no future an enormous energy but subtle energy not gross it's not noisy energy it's not that energy so is it possible for some people it is they may not have realized that it is possible to simply stop thinking the entire message of some spiritual teachers is to stop thinking some of them never said it openly perhaps they didn't want to shock the audience the entire teaching of Krishnamurti can be reduced to don't think and the entire spiritual teaching of anybody can be reduced to don't think but Krishnamurti went about the roundabout way and said let's investigate can thought solve our problems now let's think about that no and there was one teacher my favorite quote by that teacher Nisargadatta Maharaj who wrote I am that he didn't write it, he spoke it his definition of presence or meditation which is the same what is meditation, what is presence and he was a radical teacher he was very much like a Zen teacher he would shout at you so his definition was simply the radical refusal to harbor thoughts now this is not I am inviting you that is one way but it is not for everyone there is another related way that is open to more people and that is the discovery that already in your life there are many moments of no thought you just hadn't noticed because if there were not many brief moments of no thought you would be on the verge of insanity if not insane it is out of the brief gaps of no thought that a sense of aliveness arises that is still there even in people whose mind is very active where a sense of occasional glimpses of joy arise occasional glimpses of peace arise and there are humans who don't have these gaps anymore because their mind is continuously they are very very unhappy and some go insane and some commit suicide it is not that they don't have the stillness, it is covered up continuously but in still the majority of humans there are gaps of no thought and they never noticed and the wonderful thing is when you make that conscious you notice that there are gaps of no thought then the gaps become longer they become conscious because one is so humans are so identified with mind to the thinking mind the gaps when you are not thinking are totally meaningless it doesn't even know they are there and it cannot do anything with them so you cannot remember that you had gaps of no thought except sometimes perhaps when they were extremely more prolonged than others you might remember that once you climbed a mountain and it took you 4 or 5 hours to get to the top and the exertion, the physical exertion was such that you just couldn't think anymore and when you finally arrived at the top there was total stillness and at that moment the sun rose and there you stood and you remember it for the rest of your life the incredible sense of aliveness that you experienced there and you experienced it because there was complete stillness but I'm not talking about these great realizations that also of course come and go but the little ones for example, every time you look at something every time your glance falls upon something, whatever it may be a person an object a tree a flower, the sky at the first moment of perception there is no thought, there is always a gap when you first perceive something there is a gap of about a second sometimes two seconds before some kind of naming comes in which is thought and most people are not aware that that is there if you become aware that the moment you start to listen to a

sound before the mind names it there is a gap of pure perception and that is there and it is out of these gaps during the day that you still find life worth living it is not because your thought is justifying to yourself, well it's still worth living because I might still make it it's a secondary that doesn't really work that well and a point comes when the mind will tell you it's too late now, I'm not going to make it so you cannot life cannot be made into it's worth living by some kind of mental justification why you should still be here it works for a little while, it's a substitute but to realize that life is worth living, that life is good beyond the forms because when you look at the forms of life you might draw the conclusion that life is not good because all the forms die sooner or later but to realize that life is good in essence and that in essence there is nothing that is not life and the realization that death is not the opposite of life, that life has no opposite, only birth has an opposite and that's death the realization that there is a goodness to life despite the fact that everything around you dies, despite the fact that even your physical form is already condemned to death everyone everyone despite the fact that somebody close to you might disappear at any moment, including yourself you could slip on a banana skin when you walk out of here and that's the end of it you don't know or I could and does it mean that life is bad the fact that forms are impermanent that they're not reliable that all structures are unstable that the stability of the physical universe is only a delusion when you go into big cities, you see the big buildings that's going to last forever not at all, it could dissolve at any moment occasionally we see that when huge buildings collapse and everybody is dreadfully shocked that looked so permanent and yet underneath that so here we have the impermanent nature of all the it's a universe in flux it's not stable the world of form and it's a dance a dance of form but hiding underneath all the forms of life is life the one unmanifested still, ever present essence and you that reveals itself the moment the forms, the primordial forms which are thought forms subside then the clear sky within is suddenly visible the clear sky the still space of presence and so that is to be realized and from that comes that spaciousness within out of that comes an intense sense of aliveness beingness and there lies the realization that life is good despite appearances and there comes the realization that even death is part of the goodness of life and death is no longer the great monster that lurks somewhere that you need to shut out and mustn't think about that and hide all the dead bodies that's what our civilization does they not only hide the dead bodies they even put make up on dead bodies life is good that realization comes when you realize it's actually wonderful to realize how impermanent all the forms around you are to watch dissolving forms means the formless comes up in you it's only from there that you can watch that and not react that is the deathless and that the deathless is there when in the moment that thought which is primordial form subsides and so the goodness of life is felt the more you have space inside you I mean everybody has equal space but the more you know it the more you realize it because if the fact that everybody has exactly the same space within as their essence even within and without ultimately is meaningless it's very much like saying everybody is tremendously wealthy but some people have forgotten their bank account number and if you've forgotten your bank account number that has a

hundred million dollars in it you're poor or are you wealthy it's a question of perspective this is not a good analogy because a hundred million dollars would make no difference to you really to the joy of life whether you know that life is good so be aware that already that space of no thought is already in you many times during the day and again beware of sense perception and see when you first listen when you first look at something even when you first touch something there is a brief moment of no naming simply a still perception and that's where you where truly there's direct experience at that moment the moment you start thinking and naming it's no longer direct experience it's an abstraction and you've brought in the past now thought can still operate in you but it is no longer self-serving it still operates when it is needed and those humans who can think well there are not many humans who can think well most are simply burdened with noise in the head those humans who think creatively who have original thoughts not deep thoughts they don't exist deep thoughts don't exist but an original thought can come out of the depth of stillness every thought is a form it can point to the depth but in itself it cannot be deep no thought is deep so humans who can think originally original thinkers creative thinkers inspiring thinkers the way they think is they enter the state of alertness and many of them they don't even know that that's what they do they enter the state of alertness and they step back into no thought very briefly and then the words come when they have uttered a certain sequence of words they step back into no thought briefly, you may not even notice it it's not that they become still and suddenly start meditating they step back into no thought this is brief, it could only be only two seconds and some of them may feel the inner body and they don't even know it they just feel alive and then out of that aliveness come words but that aliveness is still vital, it is still and vital, it is and there's the primordial intelligence there that is consciousness itself that they touch also artists create out of that they become still and then it happens so people who think creatively it simply happens it's not even they don't think it's something that happens by itself it's a beautiful process normal humans who don't they are burdened by totally repetitive thoughts always the same kind of thing going round and round in the head and there are many humans who have not had one original thought in 20, 30, 40 years why not? because they cannot step back not for a moment out of the noise machine out of the continuous formation of thoughts and repetition of the same thoughts cannot step back into stillness and for even 5 seconds and then if they did for the first time they would have an original and a life thought I was amazed some years ago when my mother came to visit me and my mother like everybody else is burdened with a noise machine in the head she came to stay with me for a couple of weeks and first I was shocked because there's so much noise talking and continuous and it's not personal it's not because my mother is deficient it's simply the human condition and I just all I could do was sit there and be and listen and allow her to go through the motions of speaking and it's always the same it's normal too and then I was still and I was still, still, still and at some point after a few days she became suddenly still and she didn't speak for about a minute and then suddenly came what she said then I found amazing what she said then is the beginning of all spiritual seeking is the beginning of all philosophy lies at the very

beginning of all that and she said isn't it strange we are born and then we die that was an original true thought and that came perhaps because some of the stillness activated for a moment that dimension in her and so, ah, yes so even the noisiest and that question is more important than the answer just to dwell with that question you don't even need to answer it on a conceptual level just have that question there and allow the strangeness of birth and death to be there why do we need to explain it you can arrive at a knowing that is beyond concepts by simply allowing the mystery of life to be there we are born and then we die so to be creative a creative thinker it's a continuous moving back and forth between nothingness emptiness you dissolve into nothingness and then form comes back nothingness, no thingness thingness no thingness thingness because every thought is a thing not a physical thing but it's a form and a form is a thing so discover that is how to think creatively but essential here for you to discover that already that dimension is present in your life it may be there when you open your eyes in the morning you wake up and there's a moment of when you haven't remembered, you're not remembered your past and you're not thinking about the future and you haven't remembered your problems there's simply aware presence ah, there it is now it is whether or not you achieve mastery in this or that doesn't really matter some people achieve mastery in kicking a ball or throwing a ball and in there they have if they're doing it well they're doing it without thought, in other words they're not doing it at all it's happening they link into a greater whole that is performing through them, a greater intelligence is acting through them to see that in action is always beautiful and most humans love watching it, they don't know why I always say why otherwise would they watch people either kicking or throwing or hitting a ball for hours and hours, well ego comes in too because you identify with a particular team and then the team loses and you go you're depressed for three days our team has lost we have been defeated so it's there are different approaches to the same you can look simply for where the spaces already are in your life and as they become conscious more conscious they become deepened and prolonged and then if that works for you but to simply as Nisargadatta said the refusal, the radical refusal to harbor thoughts don't misunderstand that it does not involve willpower as such as we know it it does not involve opposing something it does not involve fighting thought you cannot fight against a thought you could for a little while you could suppress a thought but while you suppress the thought more and more thoughts accumulate behind that one and eventually the lid will blow off you could say I'm not going to think and you will notice your body will become tense and you may stop breathing and it may work for a little while but that's not it, it's not the arising of presence, it is thought trying to suppress thought and then the slightest thing happens while you're doing that, somebody knocks at the door leave me alone can't you see I'm meditating so that's it can be misunderstood, that's perhaps why Krishnamurti never said it there is no effort involved and yet there is intense energy there your body is quite relaxed in that state but you are present throughout the body, every cell is alive with presence every cell alive with presence and you sense the entire body and it is simply the alertness that does it, not some kind of willpower not some kind of wanting, the

alertness is there that is such that it doesn't allow thought to come and if thought does come it comes into the field of alertness which is so bright this is an analogy it's so filled with light that the thought comes and the moment it reaches the alertness it dissolves in it it goes and sometimes you can notice a thought coming up and you can you know that the eyes and the brain are very closely related they say the cells of the eyes are the same as the brain cells I don't know if that's true the you can blink if a thought tries to creep up into alertness and you notice that a thought is creeping up you blink once and you blink it away, it's gone it's a strange that's a a wonderful practice is to be practiced with your partner or anybody that you know well or once you get used to it even anybody that you don't know well is to look into each other's eyes it's not called staring it's called gazing because staring is the I'm going to outstare you staring is ego who can last longer and so on no it's we could call it gazing in some spiritual circles it is done a lot in some spiritual circles it is overdone but there's a beauty to it when it's happens naturally or as together with your partner someone you look into each other's eyes for a long time and the point of it is to share the space of thoughtless presence where you merge beyond thought the point of it is not to think about the other person or yourself but simply to abide in no thought while the looking happens and you merge virtually because when thought doesn't operate there's no thought of me and the other anymore there's simply a oneness that arises a space of presence arises between you and if thoughts do come in you can either recognize them as thoughts and say they're not important it's just a thought and you allow it to pass through or you can blink it away just once or twice one blink is enough usually a little thought comes, one blink it's gone or it comes and it drifts away and to realize thought always pretends to be important and so you have to recognize it's non-importance which is actually the case most of the time so this is a beautiful practice with anybody but there needs to be usually an agreement with the other person laughter sometimes in some spiritual circles or meditation or retreat places a newcomer comes and they've never been there before and the first person they meet they say hello my name is such and the other person goes laughter it can be very beautiful and it can also like everything else it can degenerate into something that you feel you should be doing to fit in or to be spiritual or whatever anything can become that so and then also once you can actually the same happens when you look once you practice thoughtless present looking you can actually do it with people who don't know that you are doing it but not in the way I just described it's briefer when they talk you go to the supermarket or the store and they say okay that'll be ten dollars fifty and you look at that person and for three seconds there's no thought they never know it they think you're working out in your head whether this is correct or laughter or you meet somebody and you shake hands and for a moment, two seconds, three seconds there's simply there's an energy that comes with that the ego can get in there and say I'm going to do something to you and immediately that's not it at all that's immediately mind energy so the ego can come in and say I'm going to make you present or it can say I'm going to heal you all you need give me three seconds and I'll heal you no there's no wanting in that there's no I don't want anything I don't even want the other person to be

more conscious it's simply joyful to join with that person in presence yes of course it has an effect but there's no wanting in it, I don't need that person to change and that's why I'm doing it it is a joyful thing, it is a joining and it's joyful and that changes all your interactions once you're able to look at another human being and remain free of thought only just briefly enough a completely different energy comes into the interaction which has nothing to do with thought energy, mind energy yes, and then you speak another way, very important now again to bring that dimension into your life to invite it into your life not to create it, you don't create stillness or spaciousness because it's already there, you already discover it so don't think you need to bring it about as such it's there when you speak to someone usually it consists of several sentences, it's a mind stream you're telling something, something needs to be done or this or that come to the end of that particular mind stream as soon as possible and then step back otherwise you go on and on or the other person takes over and then it goes on and then you take over and then she takes over or he takes over and some people don't even need the other person they're happy to be engaged they're happy with a monologue all they want is somebody to be there they can talk at and it goes on and on but it's very easy once you're in a conversation with somebody for the mind stream to take over the interaction completely and then you talk and talk and talk and the other person says oh yeah that's it and then you go no space so to bring also step back here the similar thing that you do when you wish to think creatively, stepping back when the mind, you've said what you had to say why carry on step back into presence you've said your bit step back into presence if only for three or four seconds maybe then you speak again but it's also there, finding the gaps finding the gaps of no thought in any interaction, even when you go to Christmas dinners and talk to your family and so on, back to no thought where you're simply then you look at the other person again and in the looking there is a stillness and there is presence very different energy so that's important so that you don't get lost every time you open your mouth as somebody said to me I can be very spiritual when I sit alone in my room but the moment I start dealing with people and talking to people I lose it and of course that's when you open your mouth then the mind stream gets even stronger in many people because it reinforces itself through the other person so it's always a stepping back into the no thingness that is the essence of who you are and then you're back into form it's a dance, life is a dance between form and formlessness well that's how life that is how when life is lived as it could be lived beautifully, it is that for most humans it's not a dance between form and formless for most humans it's being lost in form and feeling the burden of that they haven't found yet the secret of stepping back because if you know the secret of stepping back into the no thingness into stillness, into presence then the world of form which before was a very frustrating place awful place really because things go wrong continuously in the world of form and if there's nothing beyond form you cannot depend on anything out here you can't trust anybody or anything and everything lets you down eventually because nothing lasts every situation lets you down because it's not fulfilling ultimately for a little while every person lets you down because either they leave you or they die so you can't in the world of form on the

level of form alone it's not that reliable the world of form, of course not it's not meant to be reliable that's not how it works but when you are able to step back then it's actually a place that you can enjoy because your sense of self, your identity your sense of beingness your peace your aliveness does not depend on it anymore on the forms in your life you enjoy them but you don't depend because the very aliveness that you sense and feel and are, derives from the formless so from there you can enjoy the world of form it's a beautiful place too you could also reject it and then go totally into the formless but as long as you have a physical body or seem to have, why not enjoy the world of form while you're here and it's wondrous and beautiful and you don't need, no longer need to demand that the world, which is the world of form should satisfy you or make you happy because it won't you make me happy the world owes me no it doesn't the world doesn't owe you anything the world is supposed to make me happy and give me fulfillment no, fulfillment cannot be derived from anything in the world it is derived directly from the essence of your being at this moment then all the things of this world will give you a secondary fulfillment they will be enjoyable because you don't depend on them you can enjoy them you can enjoy the Rolls Royce you don't even have to give it away but if you decide to give it away you can enjoy the bicycle without needing to compare in any way the fact that you drive a Rolls Royce doesn't mean you're superior in any way to the next person on a bicycle or the other way around and you help the people that want to make a difference this is a great thing the main thing in this life is I want to make a difference in this world you cannot really make a difference as long as all the mind structures in you have not transcended the collective mind structures that have been running this world for thousands of years and you can see what that produced by reading a history book or watching TV tonight well, not here, but at home so you can see what kind of world that has produced you can only make a true difference by changing inside by accessing that by going through that shift in consciousness and then no matter where you go you make a difference you go into a supermarket you make a difference there you make a difference at work you make a difference at the conference table you make a difference wherever you are your very presence makes a difference and what in addition you do actively that varies from person to person whether you actively go and help people on one or the other level that depends one person is called upon to do this another person is called upon to do that you might be drawn to go to some country where people are starving and help there or you may continue to have your hairdressing salon and everybody who comes to you feels better when they leave not because they look better because they feel better inside we are entering the phase of silence from now except for this person on the chair and except for when perhaps tomorrow morning tomorrow afternoon we may ask questions here or if you go and have a session with someone if you need to say a few words that's fine too but I would recommend to observe the silence between now and Wednesday morning when you get up that's one day and two nights now one thing for those of you who have not experienced retreat retreatees, retreat attendants participants you may find it at first very awkward to sit at a table in the dining hall and nobody is speaking you may find it awkward if you are

sharing a room to be with one or two or three people and you can't talk to them and you can sense that awkwardness perhaps, it's the same awkwardness that you feel when you go into a small elevator and somebody else steps in and you're both standing there and it's going and usually one of them will break the silence because they can't stand it anymore you cannot endure ten floors of silence and usually one person will break it and will make a comment about the weather that's the first thing it's wet today isn't it and the other person is relieved and says yes it is and I think it's going to rain even more okay that's it, it worked so if you feel the awkwardness what do you do then very simple watch the feeling of awkwardness and allow it to be there so that you become the space around the awkwardness there's the awkwardness and there's oh I feel awkward and then you feel it you feel what it is that you feel so you bring consciousness to it and you allow, you don't say I shouldn't be feeling awkward because he talked about it no I'm not saying don't feel awkward I say when you feel awkward know that you're feeling awkward and say it's okay to feel awkward I allow myself to feel awkward the allowing also brings the space whatever you allow there's immediate allowing any condition, internal or external saying I allow it to be there because it's here now what can I do, it's the form of this moment you allow it the allowing means immediately there's a space around it and you are the allowing space because space contains it all space allows everything to be there and that is another way of course accessing spaciousness or presence no matter what the condition is the moment you allow the condition, external or internal awkwardness, whatever the moment you say oh there it is, I can feel it and it's okay the moment you allow it, you have transcended the condition because you've become the consciousness in which the condition appears whereas before you were trapped in the condition and you were little limited by the condition yourself was in the condition your sense of self you incarnated into the condition and now you step out of the condition and allow the condition you are the space for all conditions and that's beautiful and once you allow it you transcend and that means when you transcend a condition for a little while it's still there and then usually it dissolves because you are not feeding it anymore if you want to prolong a condition, you resist it external or internal if you want to prolong it, you create inner resistance or some mental resistance, I'm feeling this but I shouldn't be unnecessary, allow this moment to be as it is no matter what form it takes and if you do that, that alone takes you to the formless that alone would take you to the formless because the formless is the allowing the space that is there the moment you allow it's a stepping back from the condition stepping, I could almost say you take the self out of the condition, you take the self out of the condition and the self is recognized as space, not as something, the self is recognized in its essence as no thingness that is the self that the Hindu teachings talk about, the great self, the one self and then there's a little self that identifies with a condition a thought, an emotion, a form a car, whatever that's the little self and that the Buddha recognized that as an illusion, Buddha said there is no self, what people regard as themselves as their self is an illusion there is no self and he's right because he was speaking about the self as form any form is not who you are, any condition is not who you are so although the Hindu teachings

and the Buddhist teachings seem to contradict each other they're talking about the same thing, they're just using different terms because all that can be verified in your immediate experience, they are not abstract notions to believe in for many people they are, they say the Buddhist says there is no self and then the Hindu scholar comes and says yes there is a great self, Krishna said find out for yourself before you discuss so the awkwardness will go away if you allow it to be there and then actually it's quite nice to be in silence together, in stillness together and to eat your meal one spoonful at a time and taste it perhaps even more don't make a ritual out of anything don't say I'm going to chew 25 when you are in silence the mind will sometimes invent games to keep itself busy it will devise its own crossword puzzles in the head and then you start counting the people in the room and you become Mr. Bean Mr. Bean is so funny because there is always a basic truth of how the mind operates and he just exaggerates it a little and talking about crossword puzzles, don't go into your room and get the crossword puzzles out watch the mind as the Buddhists say the Buddhists in Buddhist monasteries when they want you to shut up, they say watch your mind so while we are in silence watch your mind be the watcher of your mind be the witnessing presence not only of the thoughts and you recognize the thoughts as thoughts especially while we are silent now don't take your thoughts too seriously they are only thoughts when you take them seriously then they get bigger and bigger when you recognize a thought as a thought it comes and goes, it's harmless there is no self in it if there is no self in thought every thought is quite harmless nothing wrong with it it doesn't really matter let it drift in, out be in the body as much as possible sense perceptions look, watch listen, smell be an alert presence not a heavy person walking through the gardens here a heavy me with a heavy past and a heavy problematic future that you carry all of them in your head be simply be an alert presence be consciousness, be a field of consciousness that walks through the gardens and there may be one or two rebellious people here who are saying, I'm not going to be told what to do and when you see them in the dining hall they say, ok, I'll have some juice now or they address you and say what did you think of this afternoon session did you get anything out of it to which the correct answer of course is nothing didn't get anything out of it laughter and so when we talk again it'll be Wednesday morning well, we will talk here it'll be Wednesday morning yes, tomorrow is Tuesday we'll be meeting here twice tomorrow in the afternoon we may ask questions that may involve words usually it does the most pointless talk by the way especially on retreats or anywhere is talking about presence what it is what I think it is laughter you're either present or not that's all laughter the mind cannot, can never really understand what presence is so don't try to sometimes, there was a retreat two years ago, after a week finally one mind which is always a human mind so it's nothing personal asked me would you please define in more detail and more clearly what presence is we had practiced presence for a whole week now the mind demanded a more clearer definition of presence so that it can put it in its pocket and take home a set of concepts and say okay now I know what presence is now what's the next workshop I can go to laughter if your body wants to move I believe there's a movement class following this and you can

be present body can be present I can feel that my body wants to move but I may not come to the class laughter Tai Chi is a beautiful thing some people say that Tai Chi originated when thousands of years ago some people watched the movement of animals and imitated the movement of animals that's one theory, this may be correct another possibility is because nobody really knows another possibility is that it originated as spontaneous movement in a human being who was totally present and then a spontaneous movement happened he or she didn't know why simply the body went into a slow dance like movement to express the joy of presence this is how I see it started who knows it happened to me once and it happened to Kim I observed her, she suddenly started moving and she had never studied before when she did that, never done Tai Chi before and it was better than Tai Chi because it was totally spontaneous it came out of presence maybe it's in her genes it came out of presence and there was that spontaneous that movement and then that was thousands of years ago perhaps the first person went into that in China and there were probably some bystanders said what's that person doing it looks incredible and then perhaps it happened again, the same bystanders came and looked and those bystanders became the first practitioners of Tai Chi because they said we want to learn that and then they got a piece of paper if they had paper, or whatever they had and said ok, left arm goes up now now the right leg goes up slightly and then it goes down again and then later they started teaching it and miraculously even though that was turning it around it still worked in some way so it works both when the movement comes from the inside out as a spontaneous expression of presence joyful presence and it also seems to work from the outside in if you do these movements you enter presence seems to work both ways well if you do them rightly and you're not thinking while you're doing them of course if you're thinking ok my arm needs to be there now and you're not present in that movement because you're already there thank you as we sit here let's see if we can be aware of let me speak as you see if I can be aware of the presence that I am at this moment see if I can be aware of of the essence of my identity which is not my past which is not my thoughts or my emotions or what happened to me but something deeper that which is hiding in my story as the sense of I but usually gets mixed gets mixed up with my story it's like one could say it is the light of consciousness and that light that pure light gets mixed up with form one could use the analogy of a film projector the light is behind the film and there are forms that obscure the light in one way or another and everybody this is a strange thing everybody is aware of who they are of their innermost sense of self or identity but through the distorted form of their story, their life their thoughts and emotions and memories and identifications which are thoughts so when we ask who are you, usually you mention the identifications that consciousness identified with I am, that you give your name and then what you do or what you have or own or status or whatever it is that you identify with and then you present that as who you are I am a such and such I am a somebody I am a self-made millionaire I am a spiritual seeker and the self-made millionaire the spiritual seeker I am somebody who failed miserably another story all the stories and then in there somewhere is hiding the sense of me, of self and that is

precious everybody knows that there is something precious that's to do with who they are people are so afraid that they lose themselves at some point and so hiding in the story is the I am that is nothing to do with time beingness presence consciousness itself before it becomes something is born into a form a thought form an emotional form and so one could ask what is it in your life or in my life talking as you what is it in my life that I can be absolutely sure of and some philosophers have asked that question what is it that I cannot doubt and they realized and scientists also asked that question and they realized that almost everything you can doubt you can doubt whether this room exists the people in this room because you have no direct experience of it because it's there is an optical your eye is a lens and so it's like a camera lens and the picture that it captures is projected onto a screen behind it, is then translated into nerve impulses that are sent to the brain and then in some strange way the brain reassembles certain nerve impulses that come through the senses in some way and forms a world out of that, a reality now what relationship does that have with what's actually out there, we don't know nobody really knows whether there's actually anything out there or whether it is simply something that is being dreamt the brain creates its dream or we share the same dream but we don't want to degenerate now into philosophy all I'm saying is you can doubt everything, including that the whole life up to now that you experienced as your life ever happened it could be a dream too it's very similar, you wake up in the morning and sometimes just before you're completely awake you remember the day before and you might think, was that the dream or did that happen but everything in the past is of the nature of a dream that dissolves and then you say, was that real or did I dream that when you arrive home after this retreat, you open your front door and then you put your luggage down and you look around and say did I ever leave did I dream all that because everything dissolves so quickly it's in the nature of a dream so you can doubt everything except one thing that you are because if you were not, the dream could not arise, the dream can only arise in the field of consciousness, there needs to be a consciousness that enables the dream to be if it is a dream or that enables your life to be there needs to be some dreamer a dream when you wake up in the morning and you remember a dream and you say it's unreal or it's only a dream well there must be something real in it the consciousness that enabled the dream to be that was real the light in which the dream appeared which is the light of consciousness and so your innermost who you are you can doubt on the level of form everything except that you are, there is beingness or presence there you don't know what you are perhaps you don't know what that is but without it nothing could be the light of consciousness I am so that is the I am that is hiding in the story the story says I am this or I am that you identify with this you identify with that that's form and you can doubt all that and it all passes very quickly but something that you cannot doubt is that you are you may be dreaming of this but you are and you may not be able to name what you are or who you are because in the moment you name it you have given the formless form so can we remain as the formless sense of I am at this very moment to sense your beingness or presence that has nothing to do with your past in fact let's pretend for a moment that you have no past and no

name because it's ephemeral anyway, what is the name it's a sequence of sounds that your parents invented for you and then you believed in it so let's pretend for a moment that you have no past or you can't remember it because if you don't remember it, it's gone anyway and you don't have a name and remain with a bare sense of being and that is what underlies all the forms in your life no name no past no future do you know who you are?

No that's self-realization you have to become happy with not knowing who you are so you enter the unknown dimension of yourself all you know is that you are but you don't know what or who you are because if you think you know what or who you are you've already limited yourself you remain as consciousness and even that's too much to say that but I say it anyway because if we call it something we've already limited it but as long as you're aware that's only a point I cannot explain it by saying consciousness I cannot explain who you are by saying you are consciousness it's only a pointer consciousness is only a name somebody else calls it Tao, somebody else calls it something else it is better to let that be nameless simply it is simply knowing that you are but not knowing what or who you are and not needing to escape immediately or again into knowing and that's the great people find it hard to live with not knowing and this is why there's the compulsion to name as soon as an experience appears in front of you you need to name it it's the mind that needs to feel secure by interpreting it and saying what it is and so we are becoming familiar here first basically with not knowing who we are because you cannot know yourself as an object of knowledge not the essence because you are that through which everything is known you are the knower itself the very basis for knowing and that you cannot make into an object and from the point of view of the mind that sense of being as a presence is a state of not knowing of ignorance but only from the point of view of the mind but the mind and the egoic mind, the ego that's associated with mind identification is afraid of that it thinks you will lose yourself but you don't and once you are comfortable with not knowing who you are but simply realizing that you are that is what we described earlier as the background to all your experiences and perceptions the I am which if we want to describe it to give you another pointer it is a sense of spaciousness space also you cannot describe you cannot grasp an inner spaciousness the I am-ness beingness presence so when you look at it we talked this morning about sense perception looking at a plant a blade of grass, a tree, a landscape the clouds, listening to the rain listening to the birds whatever it may be and knowing yourself as the background or the stillness which is the same as the I am one could say that is the another analogy it is the screen on which the world of form temporarily appears so when people meditate then they attempt to get to that realization not through the sense perceptions which is another way they attempt to get to that directly to sense the presence that they are as consciousness and here we are doing it with our eyes open while somebody is speaking not somebody but there is a voice and that is enormously even a glimpse of that gives you a sense of intense aliveness because what you are getting a glimpse of by the way, whenever we talk about

it we are distorting it and we are creating a duality where there isn't one you are not getting a glimpse of it it gets a glimpse of itself you are getting a glimpse of it there is a sense of aliveness subtle but strong it has nothing to do with the form whether the form is 20 years old or 95 years old it has nothing to do with that nothing to do with your achievements or non-achievements or what you have identified with direct sense of aliveness the joy of being beingness everything else that people seek in the world of form is a substitute because they haven't found that themselves there they haven't found the life what Jesus called eternal life they haven't found that their innermost sense the consciousness that they are and that is obscured by forms and so they look for more forms they are looking for that for themselves in the world of form and that's why living in this world for most people is such a frustrating experience because the world cannot give you what you are looking for ultimately and they don't even know that that is what they are looking for they think they are looking when I have accumulated those forms then I will be full and complete not realizing their very search for the fullness and completeness in the world of form is obscuring the fullness and completeness that's already there at this moment as their very life their very essence their very consciousness the very search for it obscures the reality of it now the search for it in the future obscures the reality of it now and so this is why as I said this morning sometimes when you obtain something that you thought would fulfill you for a moment it does seem to fulfill you if you thought your life would be fulfilled when you own your Rolls Royce or whatever it is or the mansion or finally appear on the front page of People magazine then for a moment when you see your picture on the front page of People magazine you will feel you have arrived and you might feel joy and that's because for a moment you're not looking for something more in the future the search for more forms to find yourself through has for a moment subsided and there you are and that won't last long because if you open People magazine and start to read what they write about you you will soon come down from that state because it will be completely distorted they will have created an image first they build somebody up and then they enjoy tearing them down that's how it works and that's why people love reading it because their emotions get stimulated by it another substitute for the true feeling of aliveness it's another substitute for their true being their true reality and so a large part of our civilization is there to provide people with substitutes to give them a second or third hand sense of aliveness of beingness of who they are through this and through that stimulus it starts when young children become more and more clever at devising stimulus because people there's more and more demand for stimulus because the restlessness and the discontent and the unhappiness are growing and so they say ok we must find something all these children are unhappy we must give them video games to keep them busy and give them stimulus so they at a young age they get already addicted to that input and it gives them it's a drug, it gives them it's a substitute feeling of aliveness the moment they stop playing they become restless again and the body twitches and then they go to the TV this is what our civilization has come to loss of forgetfulness we could say of being, there cannot be loss of being because the essence of who you are cannot be lost but we could

call it forgetfulness of being and then large part of the civilization is engaged in finding substitutes, substitute stimulus drugs things proliferation of things in this world promises that through this or through that you will feel better you will be more more complete you will define your identity through this or that possession and people unconsciously buy it they buy it in both senses of the word entertainment industry a lot of it is violent so it feeds the emotion the old emotion the pain body substitutes so here freedom is only in finding that which everybody is seeking in the wrong place future that everybody is seeking through some form the formless through some form and it's right here of course you will function differently when that becomes a living reality in your life which we could call which we could call the feeling of yourself the sense of your very being we could call the space in the background the stillness within all the same thing the same null thing of course how you conduct your life will be different when you are connected with that dimension you have one foot in that dimension the other foot in this dimension and in any situation there's a question and here's another pointer we had I'm never upset for the reason I think we had what's my relationship with this moment and another pointer now is there space in my perception or my relationship or in what I'm doing at this moment is there space what does that mean we already have touched upon this when we look at something the space the still space is the background to the looking and to sense that as yourself while you look the form and the formless that is the light of consciousness itself and now to sense the still background that you are is very subtle at first because the mind may look for it and you can't find it like that it's in the background as a simple nothingness that's why the Buddhists call it emptiness it's perceived from the point of view of mind and form as the nothingness in the background the no thingness in the background that's always there in everyone even in the most insane person the no thingness is there in the background it cannot be destroyed in the same way that the space in this room cannot be destroyed no matter what you do to this room you cannot destroy the essence of this room which is space you can destroy the walls but you can make a lot of noise in here and yet at some point you'll have to stop making noise and the stillness and spaciousness of this room is immediately there again so it's always don't think you have lost it or too much has happened in my life I've done too many bad things it cannot be it can neither be destroyed nor marred in any way the essence of your being but it is from the point of view of this gross material reality and even gross mental and emotional reality from that point of view it is elusive subtle can never grasp it and yet it's always there in the background as the stillness and it's there when you look at a plant and you can sense there's a stillness it's not me as a person looking at a plant when there's no thought movement there's simply a field of stillness against which the perception of the plant arises and it may sometimes happen that you sense I'm not just talking now as I talk you can actually sense that it may sometimes happen that that sense of stillness against which a sense perception happens you feel that much more strongly than the sense perception itself, it is almost it can happen that the sense perception recedes although it may be very beautiful the beingness can be so overwhelming that all sense perceptions become surface phenomena ripples on the

surface of being because the vastness of stillness that you are is so great that the entire world of form is no more than that ripples imagine being being a ball it's not because it has no shape and there's a stillness pervading the entire sphere but on the external surface of the sphere there's a ripple movement, continuously changing that's the world of form and in the depths of the sphere there's the eternal, timeless stillness and so most people are lost on the surface of things it's the world we call that the world Jesus calls it the world they are lost in the world which is the surface layer of reality we could say and that's all there is and then life becomes dramatic and frustrating and ultimately very unfulfilling so much that you want to get out not realizing that you really want to get in so when you look at a landscape a tree a flower the flame of a candle whatever it may be you may sense sometimes that we talked about it in terms of two dimensions, you may sense that the dimension of stillness becomes so vast that what you are looking at or what you are listening to is relatively insignificant, it's just a little ripple and then you may sometimes want to close your eyes and be more completely one with that but it's not yet time to completely disappear or merge with it because for a while we are here with a physical body what looks like a physical body and we are here meant to be a bridge between the world of form and the formless so the question is vital not only in your sense perceptions space is there space, where is the space can I sense the space it's a little pointer and then that's the I am it is vital in any activity that you do, now so far we have spoken about it in terms of what we could call passive perception listening, seeing touching, smelling but it is vital in any activity because that is something people not only lose themselves in sense perceptions they lose themselves even more in doing, in what they do so in any activity whether it's a manual activity then it's easier to stay present if it's manual, easier to have a sense of beingness and presence while the movement happens and if that is there then the manual activity, whatever you may be doing crafting something doing gardening some artistic creation that you do with your hands anyway it may be and there if you have the two dimensions then whatever you are creating whatever activity it is that you are engaged in will reflect that dimension if you are in touch with it while you do, while there is a spaciousness there is not little thought, there is simply aware presence that flows into the doing then whatever you are producing is of high quality, not only the end product is of high quality the doing itself is of high quality and if somebody watches you they will want to watch you more because it is beautiful to watch somebody being engaged in an activity that is not a means to an end, where the mind has created a future end that it wants to get to and in the meantime it is just the activity is complete in itself, it is not a means to something in the future there is tremendous enjoyment in the doing when the space is there with the doing but many things in this world do not involve manual things you are involved in abstract in an abstract world, mental abstractions consisting of computers of telephones of letters and documents and papers and screens and devices gadgets all abstract things that stimulate the mind that were created by the mind and stimulate the mind and it seems you can only run them if you use your mind can only operate these gadgets if you use your mind and to some extent that is true I have remained to this day computer

illiterate now if I truly had to I would learn it and surrender to it so that perhaps could even enjoy it, but I am not going to try I prefer the pen and paper for writing it's more tactile, more immediate and it seems to work so in any activity you need to say is there space in what I do the loss of spaciousness is the worst thing that can happen to you no matter what kind of activity you are involved in and it is the most common thing for people to lose that the entire civilization one can almost say has lost it people are so obsessed with the doing that all sense of spaciousness is lost so the world pulls them in whatever they are doing pulls them in completely and they always need to look to the next thing or the end of it that they haven't reached yet but they want and need to reach, I need to get to the end of that because there is another thing waiting for me that I have to do also the loss of spaciousness in doing and so that needs to be regained, once you know what spaciousness is you have glimpsed it, you have glanced it you have experienced spaciousness here or many of you already have it in your life and now it's a question of not just having it while you look at a beautiful tree, that's relatively easy but having it while you are engaged in any kind of doing mechanical, whatever it may be is there standing back and observing what it is that you are doing so there is still a background of spaciousness although you may be, I sometimes describe in this world you need to everybody is in a hurry for some reason that's the civilization that we have created and there is always little time to do whatever you have to do it seems even with me, the publisher says we need a quote for this but it needs to be in by tomorrow evening can you write a testimonial for that but we need it maximum two days, it's going to print day after tomorrow it always seems to be, I don't know why and there is always the time there is very little time okay and then you sit down and then the testimonial there is a piece of paper there if it comes, it comes first you enter spaciousness become still present pick up a pen and then something may come or it may not come sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't but I refuse to be driven mad by the world and this means some things get done and others don't get done and the world does not collapse when some things don't get done it's better to do a few things with high quality than many things low quality and if they sack you because you are now producing few high quality things and not many low quality things then that's for the best or it may be that you that others see how you work and then they catch it and they also start doing it the same way a constant alertness to see have I have I lost the space this is really another version of asking have I lost the present moment which really means have I lost awareness of the present moment and what is awareness of the present moment other than awareness of the underlying stillness the I am-ness because awareness of the present moment is not awareness of what happens in the present moment that comes that's a surface phenomenon but that's indirect awareness of the present moment that's awareness of the form of the present moment but awareness of the present moment itself is spaciousness is awareness of the underlying stillness in any moment no matter what happens and that is so the question of asking is there space in what I do or have I lost the space is the same as asking have I lost the present moment because the present moment is that is the space in which everything happens is the background is the

stillness is who you are in your essence and the question have I lost it is not an absolutely correct question because you cannot lose it but it simply points to the fact that it has become obscured but let's just put it that way have I lost it and the moment you have lost it or think you have lost it there's the opportunity the opening for re-entering the space and that is a little skill that you can acquire here if you have not acquired it already the skill of re-entering presence spaciousness when you notice that you lost it lost in quotation marks the re-entering the possibility of re-entering spaciousness the moment you realize it's gone that realization is already the re-entry of spaciousness but if you don't know that the mind will immediately come in and form a judgment out of that realization it will make a judgment and say you lost it not realizing how do you know that you lost it because you just realized that you lost it and that realization is presence but the mind uses that realization and misuses it for its own ends and makes a mental judgment out of it and say you see you lost it again what's the point in doing it or whatever the mind says so to realize the moment you know that you lost it that knowing is the re-emergence of it because if you had truly lost it you wouldn't know it you would be completely immersed in the unconscious movement the unconscious thinking the unconscious activity the unconscious reaction so to know that you lost the present moment it is there in the knowing is the awakening already and then you stay in the knowing and that is the state of alertness that is suddenly back and you suddenly feel the inner body again and the first thing as I mentioned earlier the first thing that you often notice is your surroundings again sense perceptions ah space is back and then you continue doing what you are doing with the sense of space now the place where you most easily lose it is when the mind is active and especially when the mind is interacting with other minds talking discussing something that's where you most easily get completely drawn into thought forms the consciousness gets totally drawn into thought forms and you are totally in every thought and so you can observe it when you watch maybe not here because perhaps everybody is present now but when you watch two people talking to each other or just listen to two people talking to each other you can often notice that lack of presence that lack of space in the interaction and then you said you know I really think that wasn't quite the right thing well no you are not quite it just forms one form after another there is never not a standing back from the mind stream it's being immersed in the mind stream and that's so seductive once you and especially when you are dealing with something that the world calls a problem we need to deal with this, this is so important what are we going to do about this that's how the world functions one problem after another so then to lose yourself not only in the mind stream but to lose yourself in whatever the world says matters this thing is so important we have to sort this out what do we do everybody is frustrated and everybody is so important no sense of space between it and yourself you are not there really as the space you get absorbed by the problem you get absorbed by the activity you get absorbed by the mind stream and then you suddenly you notice oh and there is a waking up again I lost the space and then the space is back and you stand back and for a moment you don't participate in the interaction the discussion whatever it is and

immediately there is a different energy field there and if you then start speaking again the words will not feed the mind they may be words but the words then come out of presence and it may be that for the first time somebody says something sensible for the first time somebody presents a real solution to the situation and that is the world is the world has two aspects, the world in your head and the world out there which is, I don't mean nature by world I mean the civilization that the mind has created so you have the inner world and the outer world which are really one the whole civilization, almost everything is mind creation very little in it contains presence, occasionally here and there, there are certain things, yes but it's rare so the world has incredible momentum the world in here primarily and the world out there, but primarily of course in here and everything it's easy to lose yourself in that because of the pulling power of the mind the inner mind and the externalized mind as the world and the world will, it's not only that the world wants to pull you in, every other mind every human who is only there as a mind wants you to contribute to his or her mind stream and wants to convince you that this really matters this is very important whenever you think something matters absolutely in this world you have lost space whenever you behave as if something was deadly serious and mattered absolutely and for some people it can be the tiniest thing just even getting the right, buying the right kind of thing in a store I got that he told me the wrong kind of what does it matter

[Speaker 4] (7:56:39 - 7:56:41)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:56:44 - 8:18:02)

and you see what people get upset about absurd things completely irrelevant and unimportant and they say it matters they believe it matters it's completely meaningless in the larger scheme can only be seen from the perspective of space so the tiniest thing people lose themselves in and get upset and angry about and tell others about and yet you might ask what about the big things because sometimes big things go wrong in this world there can be somebody close to you may suddenly die or die prematurely you may suddenly experience great loss something may suddenly go drastically wrong in your life and there's no human life in which this does not ever happen it happens to everyone sooner or later things go wrong and even there, yes of course you weep when someone close to you dies you may feel sad when somebody leaves you because it's a kind of death or your business empire collapses 30 years of work down the drain, says the mind it's just a thought not a reality yes, form collapses as they do all the time, and there may well be weeping you may find yourself weeping but if you know if you're in touch with the life that is beyond form within, at a deeper level there's also a peace and that will be there particularly once you already have touched space spaciousness or as I sometimes call it space consciousness the rest is object consciousness then if something in the world of form, including physical forms, human forms suddenly dissolves dies, leaves you

there is you as the form identity may feel sad and may weep, because one aspect of you, a small one, is form, the physical form and the psychological form of me and the depths of yourself you will feel that more strongly the peace will be stronger that is underneath the weeping for those who have already who are in touch with that dimension within when great loss happens to you and so that really means nothing in this world which is the world of forms matters absolutely because every form of course is destined to dissolve sooner or later and nobody can predict you cannot have a business contract that says if I do the right things then my form is going to survive for a hundred years doesn't work every form is destined to dissolve sooner or later and the question is are you in touch with the deathless dimension in yourself the formless, deathless dimension.

Deathless is a term the Buddhists sometimes use the deathless realm Buddhists like to use negative terms some Buddhist schools do also have positive terms but originally the whole of Buddhism is expressed in negative terms so that you don't substitute mental idols for the actual reality so Buddhism does not talk about eternal life like Jesus did but they point to the same thing it speaks of the deathless realm Amara Vati the realm of the deathless and that is exactly what we are pointing to here and isn't it amazing that that begins with looking at a flower in stillness that is the beginning of the arising of the timeless and deathless and formless dimension of who you are when you are in touch with that even what the world calls dreadful disaster yes, you may weep on the surface where you also are a form temporarily well, I'm not saying will not touch you in the depths of your being it will touch you but very differently, it will touch you in the sense that the peace that you feel will only be stronger when things around you collapse that's, I've experienced that many years ago for the first time and I couldn't understand it when things went wrong in my life the peace was stronger I said that doesn't make sense I just lost that and the peace is more is deeper it was almost like something within to compensate for the loss of a form, the formless was shining even more so that begins with spacious perception the next step is spacious doing the next step is spacious interaction with other humans and then meeting the world and whatever the world demands with the sense of space so that it doesn't draw you in completely and realize only one thing matters absolutely and that's not a thing everything else is in the realm of the relative it matters relatively but not absolutely exactly the same truth Jesus expressed in the famous parable of Martha and Mary, two sisters he was visiting two sisters Martha was busy about the house cooking and cleaning and preparing the meal for Jesus and getting so much to do before lunch is ready got so much, and Mary was listening to Jesus sitting at his feet looking into his face and Martha said come on Jesus, tell her we've got things, we need to get on with things here, there's so much to do tell her to help me I can't do it all by myself I'm going mad here and Jesus said Martha, Martha, you are worried about many things but only one thing is needful and she has chosen that one thing now modern theologians are not very happy with that they try to reinterpret it in some way, he didn't really mean that now is he saying we should never

it's not saying we should never do anything anymore but get a sense of perspective and see what really matters and that choose that first and if then the lunch is not ready on time so be it but it may be ready too but nothing matters more than finding yourself which is one with finding God, a word I rarely use because of it's misuse nothing matters more and so if things don't get done they don't get done and then after a while you see there is a balance you can do things beautifully without losing touch with being with presence teaching used to be enjoyable and nowadays at universities and schools many teachers say the administrative work and the burden of that is almost impossible to carry and so see what is primary and that is presence you choose that first uncompromising uncompromisingly so that you don't get seduced into believing that something in this world matters more, that something in this world matters absolutely nothing matters absolutely except finding yourself and then you do what you can in some cases the world around you will catch on if you start living in a different way some other people may become interested and may watch you and may ask questions or just your presence may be enough to change an environment that's sometimes possible the presence of one conscious person can sometimes change an unconscious environment in other instances if the unconsciousness is too heavy too deeply entrenched that may not be possible and then there will be a separation you will separate yourself from that unconscious energy field or they may want you to leave anyway as we said in the joke that I mentioned you will get the sack because you are not suffering from a stress related disease space space vital use that here while you interact with people space in an interaction means first of all the ability to be there as spacious presence while you listen that means the words of the other person are being received in a field of alert stillness that's how not to get drawn into the mind level of that vibrational frequency of mind because the mind wants you to join it, the other person's mind will attempt your mind to draw it out and to join it so that they can unite and reinforce each other mutually on that level of frequency of mind so the mind, come on surely you must have an opinion about this don't you think that was a dreadful thing?

I thought it was absolutely well can you listen even to somebody who wants you to and emotion may be part of it too often the ego is a mixture of mind and emotion an entity, a mental emotional entity, come on and to be able to listen in spacious presence now that requires a high degree of alertness on your part alertness has nothing to do with tension of course alertness is free of tension it is relaxed remember Buddha and Clint Eastwood together in one it's that but if you are not alert then you will lose yourself in that person's mind stream and join it with your mind stream so the person is speaking or they may just be making some innocent remarks but even there while the person speaks the ability to listen not to listen as a mind or to listen as a person but to listen as spacious presence to be there as spacious presence for the other person so the words are being received nothing now it means you are not mentally seeking anymore to either agree or disagree with that person because that's usually what the mind does it will immediately say you are absolutely right there, they should do something about it or the mind says

you are completely wrong you don't understand this at all, let me tell you how it is so you either, the mind usually looks for either a dissent I think is the word or assent either it wants to agree or disagree and here you neither agree nor disagree nor are you preparing the next thing that you are going to say if ever you prepare mentally the next thing that you are going to say whatever it is that you are going to say will only function on the level of mind and it will be uninspiring it will be of low quality only that which comes out of your mouth and I'm not saying it's an emotion that suddenly bursts out because that's possible too, no if it comes out of presence out of first there is the stillness and then that person speaks and then that person stops perhaps if you are lucky and says now what do you think and at that moment you are not thinking anything yet and then there is a moment of stillness perhaps but it may not be long, the other person may not even notice that it's stillness and then some words will come out of your mouth there is no nobody can predict what will come out but it will be more vitally true than anything that the mind could say and it's possible that the words that come out of your mouth are I don't really know to be comfortable with not knowing not to prepare mentally the next statement the next objection, the next question the next clever thing that's coming out of your mouth but to simply be there as spacious stillness and if three people are talking it's even more important and that's even more seductive or four people being in the body helps feeling the inner body as you listen I learned that lesson at my first public talk I ever gave many years ago I met somebody in London where I was living at a some dinner and he said I work for the Theosophical Society I just spoke to him for ten minutes he didn't know anything about me well nobody did and I didn't either and he said can you come and give a talk to our Theosophical Society we need people like you the first time anybody ever asked me to give a talk and I said ok what should I talk about he said you just find a title it doesn't matter and then let me know and then in three months time you can come and give the talk so when the time came close to the talk one morning I woke up and my mind said you better prepare something I already knew that to speak the truth that must come from presence not from anything that is prepared and yet my mind convinced me that I need to prepare something so I got a piece of paper at least I already knew that writing a whole script that would not be possible but I had a piece of paper not big with all the points, ten points that I thought needed to be mentioned to make the talk complete one to ten and so I arrived maybe 30 or 40 people were there and he said here is Eckhart he is going to talk about can't remember what the title was spiritual dimensions in psychotherapy they liked a complicated title and I already knew the first two points that I wanted to talk about by heart so the piece of paper was there started to talk and everybody was presence was beginning to fill the room everybody entered presence and I came to the end of point two and then the mind said now have a look

[Speaker 4] (8:18:02 - 8:18:08)

and the moment

[Speaker 1] (8:18:08 - 8:21:31)

I looked at the paper and read point three I could feel the entire energy field in the room going they'd all left me they'd all gone back into their little minds and I had gone back into mine and when I looked up again I saw two people were looking at their watches and then I started to talk about point three and presence returned and then I'd come to the end of point three and then it happened one or two more times it took me a while to learn I looked collapsed, energy field collapsed and that was the last time I ever used a piece of paper in a talk and I realize now even if I had forgotten five or six out of the ten points even if I'd only mentioned the first two points and couldn't remember anything else it would not have mattered because the essence of any true talk is not in the words the essence is in the space out of which the words come the rest you can go to universities for, that's okay it's that's what matters and even at university I experienced it once when a lecturer the only one who spoke spontaneously who didn't have notes that they'd used for ten or fifteen years read the same lecture notes there was one lecturer who spoke who just opened a work of literature or poetry and he would look and spontaneously talk never had any notes that was at the university I was taught in London a few years later I was at another university where he got invited as a guest speaker and he had come with notes I had told everybody he's great you must listen to him and when he got up he had a pile of notes and every time he read partly 75% of his talk he read from notes and everybody was okay and 25% occasionally he looked away from the notes and started to speak ah that was fresh, that was new, that was alive and it wasn't in the words, the words were there, yes they had a certain significance but where there was something present in the room beyond the words, that was that would make the talk vitally alive and so after the talk we went to a pub and I asked him why did you bring notes he said well I thought it was Cambridge here and they expected something more than just a

[Speaker 4] (8:21:32 - 8:21:32)

boop

[Speaker 1] (8:21:40 - 8:34:58)

so it's very rare at university to find that dimension extremely rare a few geniuses there who miraculously survived within that structure, yes but mostly the entire thing is mind and therefore it is not a place universities are not usually places that are where you feel true aliveness, they are dense energy fields some more than others but here and there they manage just as in medieval times you had a few great mystics, teachers who miraculously survived within the catholic church some of them were tolerated or they hadn't discovered yet what they were really talking about and they miraculously survived within that structure and so even at universities there are some alive beautiful beings who miraculously survive within that otherwise totally mind dominated structure

so the ability to speak from presence not to prepare the next thing that you are going to say and that is to speak from space is there space in this interaction no relationship can thrive without space that's the most vital ingredient in any relationship and space is the formless dimension of who you are, the stillness is there stillness is another question is there stillness in this relationship and stillness is to be able to listen in stillness to be able to look at your partner in stillness the wind is sweeping away all the old mind structures we had a retreat here four years ago and on the last night there was a violent storm several tents collapsed and the roofs the tiles got blown off the building ah I'm not predicting anything you may remember Jesus saying truly I tell you whenever he says truly I tell you in the old translation it says verily I tell you whenever Jesus says truly I tell you he's saying now listen up unless you become like little children you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven so in many ways living in presence is like living like a it's living like a little child there's a sense of openness of wonder of awe of continuous newness the only difference is when presence arises in an adult human there is the same openness that you have in a child in whom the mind has not taken over yet with an added dimension of knowing of depth not only are you in touch with that dimension you know that you are in touch with that dimension without formulating any thought you just know it there's a knowing that has nothing to do with concepts and that knowing will play an increasingly important part in your life and gradually substitute the conceptual knowing that people think they need they cannot live without it will gradually substitute that a non-conceptual knowing and that already is there when you look at a plant you know that it is a plant but you're not limiting this life being to that by imposing the label plant on it you also leave untouched the mystery the unfathomable dimension of every life form you don't fall into the error that you can explain the mystery that is hiding in each life form that can never be known through any mental concept but can be known as a reflection of the essence of who you are so the mind is to a large extent pseudo-knowledge it believes that you know the moment you've called it something nothing, you don't know anything if you call it something, you just have given it a label or a sound, you've attached a sound to it, it's such and such a plant now you think you know nothing it remains as mysterious as before except now you have the illusion that you know what it is the world is a complete mystery and it should remain a complete mystery that's the beauty of it it cannot ultimately be known conceptually, it can only be known yes, as a reflection of your very being and yet even there that remains a mystery the modern world has lost all sense of sacredness because sacredness and mystery are intimately connected holiness or sacredness when the mind labels everything there's no sacredness left because there's only pseudo-knowledge left sacredness is there the moment there's space and that's why you go into certain places that are considered sacred where people who are attuned to it can still feel something and there's always great spaciousness in those places there's always a sense of space whether it's a temple or a cathedral an ancient cathedral and preferably you go in when they're not doing something in there when there's just the empty space there's sacredness or certain in nature there's the space between two hills or the space of a cave a sense of there's

always there's no sacredness without space and the primary realm of the sacred is your own self the space that you are there goes a thought and that's fine an externalized thought noisy smelly laughter again to remind you tonight when you are in bed lie in on your back and go into the body go into sleep from inner body awareness when you wake up go back into the body rest in there so that the mind doesn't immediately take over and then all the little things here sense perceptions hearing, seeing maybe smelling occasionally touching doing little doings bring presence into little doings walking one step at a time no need to arrive at the last step you'll get there anyway at the moment this is the step you're taking doing little things hand lifting a cup of coffee, a cup of tea juice just present with the movement so that presence flows into what you do it's not a means to an end it's simply the moment of drinking isn't better than the moment of reaching for the glass or the moment of the glass traveling to the lips it's good can this movement happen against a backdrop of space in other words can you lift the glass and put it back without the interference of thought simply alert stillness so any movement you can do like that is it possible to perform this little, you have to find out for yourself can you perform this movement in spaciousness put this from here to there how long does that take to put something from here to there it takes about three seconds but that doesn't matter it's three seconds of presence and no thought just alert presence that's a little spiritual practice I don't know if anybody has ever suggested that you pick up a little thing and put it from here to there space and that's not asking a lot but it's an enormous thing because what comes into your life then is space is thoughtless presence alertness the ability to do things without the interference of thought but not unconsciously with great consciousness but without the interference of thought so walking from here to there don't make it a very long distance don't say okay I'm now going to attempt half a mile without thought it's enough between here and the next tree every step I'll just be present with every step and okay then you're there you can then try the next tree or forget about it

[Speaker 4] (8:35:04 - 8:35:06)

I've forgotten what my problems are

[Speaker 1] (8:35:16 - 9:45:16)

we will have a communal silence probably starting tomorrow evening and go on until Wednesday morning tomorrow evening, that's Monday evening until Wednesday morning I will suggest that we be silent together and particularly at that time many things you can practice like that because nobody is going to interfere and ask you questions or tell you their opinions or if they do you tell them to quiet we're talking about movement there will be movement classes apart from the yoga classes that you have in the morning those who feel awake enough early in the morning can go to yoga if that's the kind of movement your body likes or holding and Kim is doing movement classes the first one after this after sitting for a long time it may be helpful I believe it's not outside

today but in the Leela Hall Leela is the Indian word for divine play in the Leela Hall so you can move the body there and here is exactly what we were talking about to bring presence into movement I talked about little movements that you may do in your everyday life and then there's also the possibility of being present with any kind of movement, it could be a spontaneous movement or it could be a movement that you have learned as in Tai Chi where you move just one movement while this arm moves from here to there to move it to be a high quality movement you need to be present and not wanting to be there while you're still here and not being here while you're already there with your mind to just be there at every moment so you cannot do movement well if you're not thinking you have to be present so movement can be a great help for the arising of presence and when you listen to that wind can you sense the stillness underneath it the listening presence that you are being and that's a beautiful contrast because in a way wind seems the opposite of stillness it's an enormous movement and yet it's happening against the background of stillness somebody once asked me why are you quiet before you wait for so long before you start speaking and the true answer of course is because I don't know what to say now that could be very uncomfortable if I thought that I should know what to say that would be a nightmare and some people have these nightmares you dream that you suddenly you sit somewhere and suddenly the curtain opens and you're in front of a large audience and you don't know what to say but it's only a nightmare because you think you should know what to say if you were comfortable with not knowing what to say would be fine so there are two states of not knowing one is not knowing and thinking that you should know and the other is not knowing and being at ease with not knowing then the not knowing is actually a very deep state of knowing but not conceptual but it's covered up as long as you think that you should know or trying to know or trying to figure out or interpret or you should know what the next moment what's going to happen the next moment so by thinking that you should know or by attempting to project yourself to the next moment you cover up the depths that's in you that we could call not knowing but that really is simply non-conceptual intelligence formless intelligence primordial intelligence it's not something we can measure sometimes people think they can measure intelligence but all they can measure is form thought form solving little problems or puzzles which is a tiny fraction of true intelligence to be comfortable with not knowing in a conceptual sense is part of living in the state of presence and it's not only when you're in front of an audience because you may or may not be but also be comfortable with not needing to interpret the situation or another person as the old 60s Beatles song went let it be there it is let it be why have to figure out what it is why?

of course because the ego feels better it has control over life if you can figure it out interpret it judge it then the ego feels it's in control it's not, it's an illusion and the more the ego feels in control the more deeply you are immersed in dream and illusion and then comes a point after a few years of doing that and you inhabit your own conditioned illusory reality and that you experience then as the world and what you react to is then

not actual situations but your view your interpretation of the situations and then you recreate the same thing it's a vicious circle we could talk about it a long time but this is essential that you feel at home with leaving things alone leaving people alone that's a great gift the greatest gift is to leave them alone when the ego says yeah but I need to protect myself who knows what he wants from me there is a knowing that's not conceptual and you'll find yourself doing the right thing saying the right thing you know as the buddhist thing goes I can't remember all the right action, right speech, right this right that and I love buddhists I mean buddhism the I think they start from up there you cannot generate right speech, right action and so on without being in the right state of consciousness it flows out of the state of presence naturally as long as you're not present you can try hard to practice right speech and right this and right that but it's hard and many times you won't get it right so I don't believe the Buddha ever said you should start up there I'm sure he said let's start with the foundation and he didn't explain all that much conceptually, that came later he might have said be in the body or said take a conscious breath observe your breath or something like that, which of course means stop thinking you can't observe your breath without, and think at the same time if you think, you either think or you observe your breath another way of space arising space observing your breath you can do it as a meditation where you sit down and light a candle and light the incense or you can observe your breath at any time, at any moment just one breath at a time brings in a space into your life one breath at a time observing simply means following it with your attention feeling it, sensing it as it enters the body, the air enters the body and even noticing the tiny gap when the in-breath has come to an end and then observing the breath as it leaves the body and even being conscious of the tiny gap after the out-breath has come to an end and that's a very simple thing but it requires alertness and it brings in space so it's just that one little thing which is also closely related to being in the body because as you observe the breath it takes you into the body so almost without wanting to, you begin also to feel the body at the same time takes you out of mind it creates space and it doesn't matter it would be more helpful to remember 50 times during the day to take one conscious breath than to sit for very long periods in meditation bring it into normal living just one breath at a time or if you can, maybe two but people say I haven't got time for meditation that's fine, then don't meditate just take conscious breath during the day have little reminders next to your computer in the bathroom or wherever to take one conscious breath and there's nobody in this world who does not have time for one conscious breath 50 times and then people might say yeah, but 50 during the day and that is space arising spaciousness just that and then out that is presence and then out of presence comes right speech or no speech, could be even better many times unnecessary speech drops away also arises right action if it's needed and unnecessary action drops away a lot of the action generated by egoic consciousness is unnecessary they're all running around like mad and but of course some action is necessary and then you'll know the difference becoming acquainted with space consciousness which is not from science fiction but it's to do with inner space we call it inner, but ultimately everything is inner the whole world

is an inner phenomenon because where else does the world arise so you could say there's nothing that is not inner there was one Zen master little known one of his ways was he would call a disciple in the monastery he would call their name when they were nearby as if something very urgent was happening John yes master and then they looked at him and he didn't say anything and so the new monks or nuns or and some of the old ones too they try to figure out he's trying to tell me something what's he trying to tell me he's not trying to tell you anything the interesting thing is it's not about content these disciples or monks they expected content to come from the master and all the master pointed to was space content doesn't matter to him he's got nothing to say what can he put in all he's interested in is space not content so all the master wants is your attention, your wakefulness your alertness your spacious awareness he doesn't want to fill it with anything and that's when you that's such a shift when you you shift from a life a content based life which is normal and normal equals insane as we know content content based life almost everybody lives a content based life a life entirely dominated by content their situation the so called external content the things they start with physical objects that they own or that are in their life that they have to worry about that's physical thingness content content is then the situations that arise, the relationships the problems that arise life situation content is your own body and your concerns about that other people that you meet, your work your financial situation the drama whatever, all that is the content of your life on the external level that absorbs people's attention and for most people the entire attention is in the content of their lives, what's going on in my life and then there comes the inner content the thoughts one after another, ultimately of course it's all inner, but just for the time being we divide it after inner the thoughts which they are identified with and which are related of course to the life situation and so on, and then there come the emotions both the emotions that are generated now by egoic thinking and the emotions that have lived in you for a long time accumulated from the past pain, from childhood pain from the more distant collective past of humanity that comes up periodically we may talk about that in a little bit more detail, but for the time being just to see all that is content and that absorbs people's consciousness virtually a hundred percent their thoughts, their emotions and the things that are going on in their lives and that's how there's nothing else, a content based existence and then comes the realization that there is another dimension without which content would not even be possible, there wouldn't be no content just in the same way we couldn't put any furniture or bodies in this room if there were no space here but we don't, it's easy to forget that the essence of this room is space and it's easy to forget that the essence of yourself is equally space the space of consciousness but that space is so crammed full with content that you can't see it anymore you can't sense it so it's almost as if content obliterated space in people's lives and then life becomes a burden and what they try is they try to rearrange the content of their lives in such a way that finally their life works but a content based life cannot work because the most vital essence the very aliveness of life is missing the essence which is space which is not content which is not form, the formless essence of all life, life itself is missing and then no matter how you rearrange

the content and some people are obsessed with rearranging the content of their lives they think just a different configuration of furniture will change everything furniture meaning content and it doesn't many times you might think okay now I've made it that's it, new relationship new place to live, new job new climate everything is it's perfect now and it's not and soon you find out that wasn't supposed to be here and that is what the Buddha says means when he talks about dukkha, suffering which can also be translated as just plain misery and so he said wherever you go, whatever you do you will encounter suffering, misery or it can also be translated as unsatisfactoriness not quite fulfilling not quite it so it's the degrees of dukkha just unease is already dukkha irritation is already dukkha and then it gets there is more and so he is talking about a content based existence and so primary is not rearranging the content of your life but finding that which lies beyond content and to do that you don't need time or future and you don't need to have the content of your life in a particular way so that finally you have time to find you don't need time I need time to find myself I can't do it not here I need more space I can't share a room with three people I need space, I wish I had stayed home I could have done better meditations at home could have done my own retreat at home and then I had to wait for the bathroom that's all, that's not these are not ideal conditions, I can't practice in them observe your thoughts don't believe in them the best place to start the only place to start with finding space is at the very conditions of this moment the three people in the room one of them snores waiting for the bathroom and then observe the thought that comes in and says I can't do it, I need space, my own private space and observe that as a thought and let it be then the thought doesn't grip you anymore, it doesn't have that hold on you where your whole sense of self is in that thought and you actually 100% believe in what that thought which is a thought form, which is content says so the thought form, the content says I can't find the space now of course it says that, because it is it is form it wants to be there as form every life form wants to persist in that form it has a certain momentum including thoughts so it's only by observing the thought and then saying, ok why believe in it I can't I need more space the thought comes and goes you allow it and in that moment you have the space or you have a reaction, emotional that goes perhaps with the thought and then you observe that you step, oh and you also allow it ok and there's the space, the moment you allow something there's space you step back out of it we could call that consciousness disidentifies from form you step out of a thought or an emotion you don't deny it you don't push it down you don't repress it you simply step, you were in it and then you step out and really what's happening is on a cosmic level we could almost say you look like a person but you're not a person, it's just a temporary appearance consciousness disidentifies from form or another way of putting it it's the end of the dream that consciousness dreamt the dream of forms steps out and realizes itself as space so it's always there the thoughts will come in and then you simply allow the thought to be there and especially we talked yesterday about the possibility perhaps of simply being so alert that thoughts don't come in anymore only as little fragments some of you may be able to do it or you may be able to do it for short periods of time it just depends on how much

presence is coming through but one could say even more important than that is to find a spacious relationship to thoughts, the thoughts that are still there that's fine, that's enough really to find a spacious relationship this is just one way of putting it to find a spacious relationship to the thoughts that are still there that come thoughts are only problematic if your self is in them, because then the thoughts become a me, an ego when the thoughts are free of self, and that happens every time you step back and say there's a thought, or the emotion then the thoughts lose their heaviness you know the heaviness that otherwise people carry around with them as themselves, which are their thoughts plus the emotions that go with the thoughts there's always the next thing to be offended by and complaining about, or then one thing attracts your attention and then it disappoints you and lets you down, then you can complain again or at first something is just great, this is the greatest thing on earth but it's form and so then it lets you down it could be a spiritual teacher, it could be anything he's the greatest and then the form of the teacher does something oh no, he's not he burped after dinner and of course the content-obsessed mind loves to idolize other forms before, in many cases before it gets let down by them and then tears them down and complains about them it loves to idolize form because it mistakes the essence, the formless one life, one consciousness with form, and that is when it idolizes persons and of course there's the Buddha and Jesus yes they also burped occasionally after dinner of course they did because they had a physical body and other things and yet something was shining through them the formless and the egoic consciousness confused that with the form because it knew nothing of formless or in a very remote way it had some inkling that there was something there that's divine of God so there's a distant recognition but so distant that as the mind obscured it came in and misinterpreted it and this can also happen to yourself and it has happened to some people in whom presence has arisen who became transparent enough present enough for space the formless consciousness to shine through the form the psychological form especially the psychological form lost its density the egoic density which consists of an incessant stream of thoughts and emotions and so when it lost its density there were increasing gaps in that and suddenly the power of the divine if you want to call it which it is was able to come through the form but there's still the form still to some extent operates and so it has happened and can happen that the form consciousness, the object consciousness that is still operating although there are increasing gaps is now interpreting the power that is the power that is totally non-personal it's nothing to do with this form it's there because the form has become transparent but this content consciousness misinterprets that and identifies with the power that flows through and says that's me and then what tends to happen these spiritual teachers will suddenly start saying I am the greatest who ever lived I am greater than and no greater will ever come after me form identity has reasserted itself the power was there and may still be for a little while be there so you can sometimes have the discrepancy in certain teachers there's an ego which sometimes can be quite mad because there's an enormous power there suddenly and the ego misinterprets it and claims and says it's me and when this happens usually it's the case when the teacher

has certain claims of uniqueness that greater than this one or that one or that one greater than a comparison which is always an ego device comes back in so be careful when you go to teachers who say no greater has ever been or will ever come or something like that or I'm the greatest at the moment on the planet there may be a greater one once I'm gone but not while I'm here and so that's not only in it's also something to be aware of in yourself the ego can easily misinterpret what is happening in you to you in you the process of transformation, the ego doesn't understand it in some ways the ego is afraid of it or at other times it might have a different approach the ego can identify with almost anything, now what happens once the teacher has claimed his or her unique power and often it's the disciples who do it to the teacher and the teacher may just say nothing because the teacher rests in the form and the disciples say he is the greatest because he's our master and some masters allow people to say and do whatever they like they don't care if you think I'm the greatest you can think what you like especially Indian teachers have that attitude which is quite nice do what you like I don't care so it can happen and it can also happen if there's still content consciousness left in the teacher the tendencies the egoic tendencies may have become dormant and yet they're still waiting and they can then be brought back to life by projections of specialness from people around you and so others believe that you are very special and then that awakens the dormant tendencies of the ego and suddenly one day you wake up and say they are right I am very special and then you get the weird thing in teachers that they begin to speak truth and half and non-truth mixed together and that can be quite confusing to at that point it's better to go away and take a conscious breath because that's all you need really and then it often happens that the space becomes obscured again in the teacher the power of the teaching is lost and then the words that are being spoken are just from memory accumulated knowledge and some of the disciples may never notice it because they're so identified with their viewpoint of who the teacher is, which is mind they're so identified with their thoughts, their mind that they don't even notice the vital vitality of the teaching the true aliveness of the teaching isn't there anymore because they're just stuck in their minds so but here the important thing is in yourself see, the ego often comes in and you need to be alert and be conscious of specially any idea of specialness some people suddenly get the idea that they are Jesus when and the spiritual power that comes through is true, it's the same power that came through Jesus but that doesn't mean that they are the form, identity of again, the mind's misinterpretation is of course you are Christ, in essence you are Christ because the very same life consciousness that came through him is in you as your own essence in that sense you are of course everybody is Christ the Christ but that's not what they're saying they're saying I am and you are not or they say I am and you will be in ten thousand years time space consciousness simple thing, remember the just a breath brings in space it's worth more than a hundred spiritual books a conscious breath practiced throughout the day whenever you remember and then it more and more the space is there because every book is content now it may well be that if it comes from space if the book comes was written from presence then within the content is hiding

space and so when you open a book like that you read a few lines and you transcend the content because the content always points towards the space the entire content of your life then becomes of secondary significance and that's called freedom from the world and that means whatever happens events or things that don't happen but you thought they should whatever happens in your life is only content and it never again matters absolutely one hundred percent not that it is not honored the world of form is also honored but whatever happens to you or around you in your life never loses the power to take away your peace to shake you the power to draw you in totally and not that you now have a separation between you and what happens, no there is a sense of openness but you are not dependent anymore on what happens because you have something better which is yourself which is the space that you are the stillness, whatever pointer you want to use and then you notice it for the first time when things that used to upset you now just happen and you allow them oh because you are rooted in being you allow what happens that in itself can be a practice for space allowing being aligned with what happens allowing it because it is there anyway it is happening anyway it is an event, there it is and there is the space Krishnamurti described the secret of his life once in a talk let me tell you my secret he said and everybody thought finally he is telling us we have been waiting for 30 years for it to come to every talk and every talk was like sand running through their fingers there was nothing there to grasp of course there wasn't because he was pointing to something that is beyond content so people were hoping to take something home after a talk and then they went back home and said what did he talk about he said I don't know, it's gone and this may happen to you also especially since you are not getting a folder with 100 steps for the next 10 years this is what we did so he said you want to know my secret I don't mind what happens that's it so most of the people didn't get it because they thought what next he is going to say something else so what does that mean I don't mind what happens my life is not based on content the content I described that in the book as your life and your life situation and what most people call my life what they are really referring to is their life situation that's what they call my life their divorce or their next marriage or the relationship they have now and their job situation and their health situation and their living situation and their financial situation that's my life what else is there so basically it boils down for most people to these things the physical situation healthy or not healthy their age, their relationship marriage, divorce their financial circumstances the place where they live the work that they do this work situation their function in society how society sees them what society tells them about them whether they are important or not and the weirdest most insane people are important in this world and many of wise people are not important that's all totally mixed up totally irrelevant of course nothing to do with your importance but that's how people see their lives when I go to LA there are many people who are desperately wanting to be famous actors the city is full of people who want to be famous actors and it's just in the nature of things that only a small fraction of those can become famous there can't be that many famous actors because otherwise if everybody is famous it's meaningless it won't serve the ego anymore and so many of them if they don't go

beyond fortunately some of them come to our talks and then they see beyond that and go beyond that but if they don't go beyond that many of those their life is condemned to be frustrating and what they would see as a failure a failed existence I could have become a great actor but nobody discovered me and then they miss hundreds of other things that they could do or could have done but primarily they would miss who they are beyond the content of their lives so all that is the content and that is what happens or doesn't happen and the moment you become still or the moment you allow the content of this moment to be as it is not what I regard my life situation but simply the content of this moment just this moment to allow that you don't allow your life situation that doesn't work because your life situation is an abstraction it's a story so the story says my life has failed up to now but maybe I can still make it it says I've lost it all there's no point in starting again I might as well accept that because Eckhart says we should accept but that's a story in your head it's an interpretation and it's totally meaningless to say that your life has failed that you can't make it these are all stories that's not what acceptance is about it's not you're not being asked to accept a story in the head but that you're telling yourself and others about your life acceptance is only to do with the form that the present moment takes so if you're in prison then it's the acceptance of that you're sitting here and there's a window with bars and there's a little bunk bed and whatever the situation is around you and you're breathing this is how it is at the moment there that that yeah and it could be very unpleasant maybe you're cold, maybe it's noisy, maybe it's hot maybe you're still hungry it is but it is as it is at this moment it is as it is not the story I'm going to be in here for another ten years that's a story the acceptance is only needed for this moment and if you accept this moment as it is because there is never anything else the rest is abstraction there's only this moment and then it's an uncompromising facing the reality not the story with which you interpret this moment but the direct reality of this moment and people confuse that with a story they tell themselves about it here I am, my life has failed I'm just giving the example of prison because that is usually interpreted as a very undesirable life situation it could also be an illness, it could be a physical disability it could be some great loss that has suddenly happened to you whatever it is, I'm just taking a more extreme situation that usually people would invent stories about and would make you very unhappy if you are sitting in prison and telling yourself stories about your life you become very unhappy but if you stay with just this moment at that immediately the prison becomes for you a monastery no matter how unpleasant it is and Zen monasteries can be pretty unpleasant almost as bad as the prison some of them and in Tibet they even have the practice some of the monks, they go out in the middle of the night the temperature is sub-zero and they meditate naked or they put a wet blanket on you that would be called torture torture you stay with this, just this moment and the worse your life circumstances get the stronger the motivation your motivation will be once you know have a glimpse of the truth the stronger your motivation will be not to leave this moment does it mean you are not facing reality? no, it means you are for the first time facing reality because reality is the form that this moment takes there is, let's stay present for a while there is your sitting

on the floor, on a hard chair there is your metal dish with the gruel or whatever you have just eaten there are the bars this is how it is at this moment there is nothing you can do unless you decide to escape, in which case that is what you do at this moment but if there is no possibility you stay with what is and you face it for the first time because any story that you invent about my life which is your life situation, is thought is an abstraction and that is not facing reality so the only way you can face reality is always to face the reality of just this moment and the worse it gets the more strongly motivated you will be not to leave this moment because the moment you leave this moment you will become very unhappy the moment you start thinking about my life because there is no such thing as your life there is only this moment you are life experiencing consciousness, experiencing the form of this moment but you are always, deep down untouched by anything the space itself in which things happen you are the moment you allow things to be as they are at this moment only you realize yourself as the space in which things happen and not as what happens you are not what happens you are the space in which it happens and at that moment you have stepped out of content of your life particularly when the content becomes so called unpleasant, it is vital that you step out of content, but only by facing the content directly, not by running away from it internally it's again, it's by facing the very limitations of the life of form at this moment and one of the greatest limitations is to be in prison, another perhaps even greater limitation is to encounter the limitations of your physical body when it happens you can't move anymore, or it's hard to move, or the body is getting so old or diseased to face directly, not to invent a story around it but to face the condition directly, this is how it is the very limitation when it's faced and totally allowed to be becomes an opening into space consciousness and that's the miracle of the turning around the turning around the worst thing in your life can be the doorway and will become the doorway, but you don't have to wait for the worst thing to happen to you it may or it may not well death will come eventually sooner or later, sometimes sooner sometimes later, you don't have to wait until they put you in prison or until the body fails or until the stock market collapses and the real estate market collapses, so even that's gone, who knows, I'm not predicting, you don't have to go around and sell your shares but the world of form is unstable you don't have to wait for anything just work with every little thing by choice face this moment at any moment directly and bring an uncompromising yes to it that's not, it is passive and active at the same time the passive seems to be that you say I allow this moment to be as it is but you cannot allow this moment to be as it is unless you bring an uncompromising this is how it is that's the sword that you can see in the face of the Zen master it cuts through time through every mentally constructed story to the reality of just just this then on the periphery of your life you still have, of course you have a past a kind of past, you remember it and you have a future but it's not heavy anymore, it's on the periphery of things so here we your life situation and your life your life lies underneath what happens your life even that's a mistake to say your life because language immediately creates illusion that's why some teachers never talk and for some reason some are mad enough to talk my life is an illusory statement even when I say

your true life is not the content even that is not your life because there is no separation between you and life you are life you are life both in the unmanifested, timeless eternal essence of all life is in you as pure consciousness and you are a temporary expression of life in this form so there is no such thing as my life because you are life manifesting temporarily as this form so where is my life? you are life I am life experiencing the world of form as like this at this moment and then it will change and then it will change again and it will change again so I don't have a life and you don't have a life because the moment you say I have a life or my life you separate yourself from life and you think there is something there is me and there is life who is talking? life is talking you cannot be without life your very being is life so how can you lose your life?

it's only through mental abstraction that you can have the illusion that you can lose your life there is not you and life or could there be? who is that you talking without life? nobody could say me or my so isn't it great that you cannot lose your life because you don't have one?

so how deceptive language is and of course language is thought thought that becomes sounds very basic sounds so we are hoping to to understand the universe through that how could you? just a few sounds absurd so there is not it cannot take you to reality and it doesn't have to really what it's good for is basic things give me please a glass of water that works I am thirsty or whatever, please come here that works and that's how language originated, it's to reproduce to find symbols for things and then symbols for actions and there are still many words that are there that are simply originally imitated the sound of an action and then become like knock knock whistling, whistle whistle all these many onomatopoeic as I have called sounds that imitate actions, the sound of action, no more no more than that so let's go from one level of discourse you say your life situation and your life that's one level of discourse on that level it is helpful let's look at it for a moment from that perspective there is your life situation and there is your life and your life is vital, eternal your life situation is content and your life is space the formless unmanifested one eternal life that expresses itself in form temporarily as the content that's one level of discourse, if you want to go even more closer to reality even that's not true to say that it is your life it's just a helpful pointer it's not the truth language cannot encapsulate the truth so when we say there is your life circumstances and there is your life it's a pointer so all the stuff of my circumstances are not my life they are just the content of my life my fifth marriage my sixth divorce my bankruptcy my children getting into trouble someone close to me dying all content of life and then there is life and now let's say that's your life to find your life face this moment directly the form of it the content but not the story just this and then by facing it directly and accepting it go beyond the form if it's a limitation and usually form is some kind of limitation because even if you'd moved from a cabin or a trailer to a mansion at first it would look like a liberation and then you find the mansion has it's own kind of limitations different kinds of limitations you need staff to look after it there is always somebody around if it's in a

good climate little ants may come in and basically it doesn't make much difference what kind of bed you sleep in whether you sit in a comfortable chair or not so comfortable chair it's not that's a big deal it's only when you associate it with me and the story it becomes a big deal my life situation my life and then it's not really your life because it is life you are it so we go from that level of discourse to even deeper and say it's not even your life it's life and you are it or even better because there is no ultimately on that level you and I it's not that you are it I am it I there is only one ultimately cause and miracles puts it beautifully I believe it's there there is only one of us there is only one primordial I it is the I of all beings the life essence in each form of life the space in each form of life which even physicists are beginning to discover because when they look at forms then they see that every life form including so called inanimate life because there is no such thing as inanimate life the table is full of pulsating it's a pulsating energy field it just looks inanimate through our senses physicists will tell you it is an energy field it's pulsating there are atoms moving atoms and molecules but the atoms and molecules that make up the table or the physical body or the flower they are so they are so few that both the table and the physical body consist 99.99% of empty space so much space is not only between the atoms even if you look inside the atoms you find even there it's almost exclusively empty space so you can see how the physicists view